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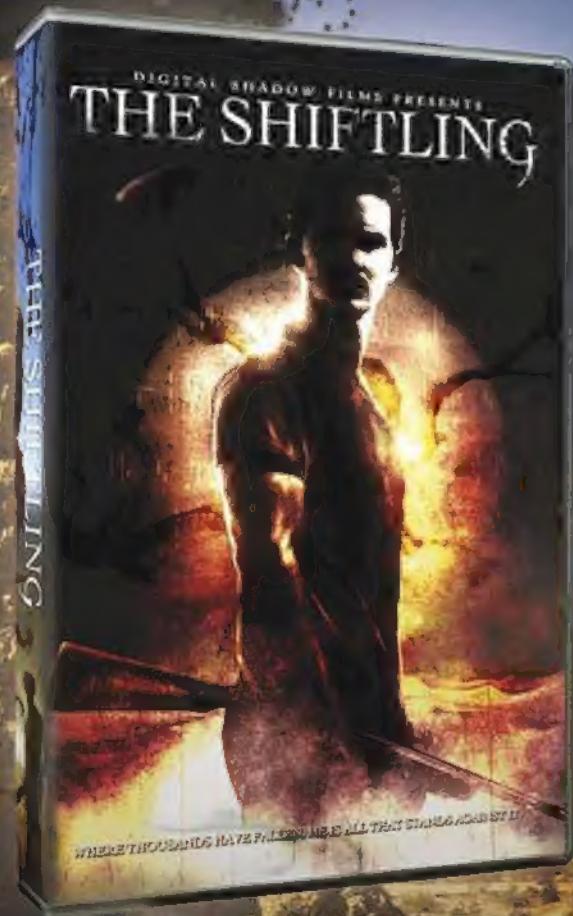
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Exploring the world of the unexplained

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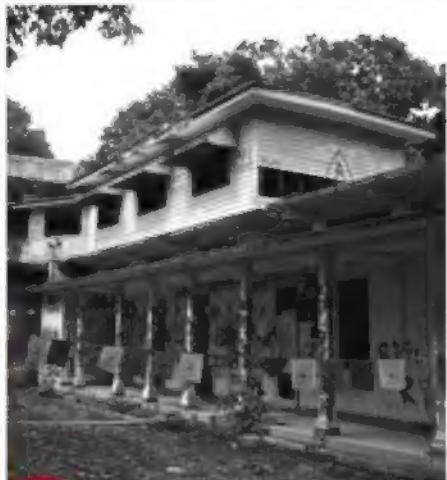
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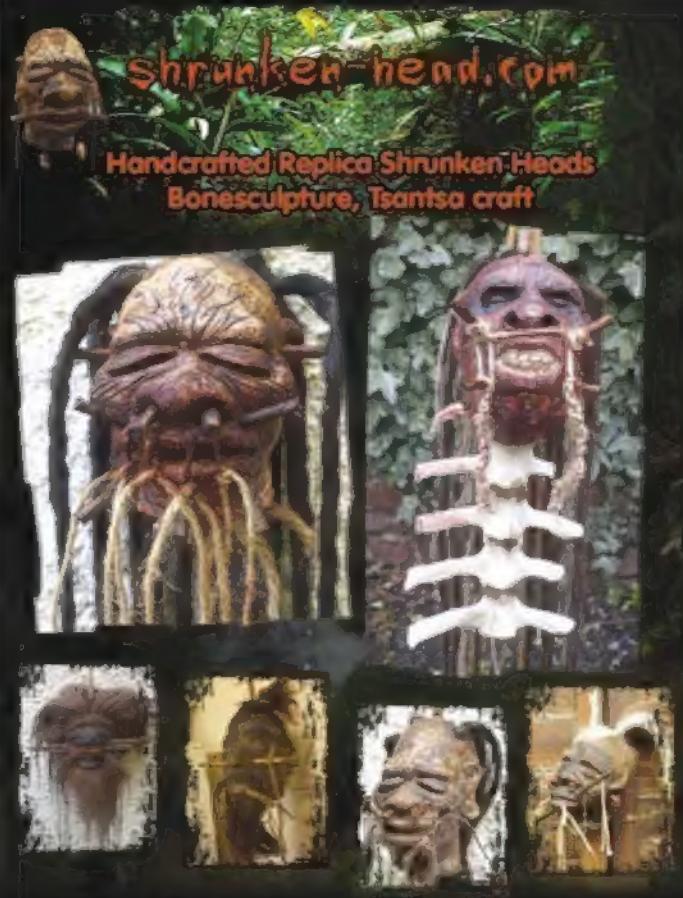
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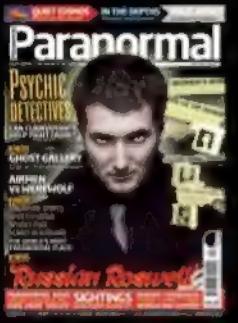
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Paranormal

Exploring the world of the unexplained

EDITORIAL

A word in your ear



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Once again I find my brain itching at the way science and the supernatural keeps intermingling - without scientists ever acknowledging the fact.

Psychologists in the Netherlands have just discovered that nearly 10% of mentally normal young children regularly

hear disembodied voices - 'auditory vocal hallucinations' to use the parlance. Admittedly, I have not seen their research paper, only the press report based upon it, but I think it's reasonable to assume the psychologists avoid mentioning 'ghosts' or 'ESP' in their research. I doubt they have looked beyond the assumption that they are no more or less than 'hallucinations'.

However, I'm sure many of you who read the full story on page 6 will, like me, find yourselves asking: Might the children not be hearing whispers from the beyond? Or perhaps the whispers of the subconscious minds of those around them? There is considerable anecdotal evidence that children are more sensitive to psychical influences, and perhaps this new research is evidence of that.

Unfortunately, so damned is the 'supernatural' that a potentially invaluable line of research is likely to be avoided. Which is a pity, because so much of what we call supernatural might in fact be entirely natural, just misunderstood. If these findings are evidence of a latent ESP ability in small children, this would have profound consequences, surely? And if it was evidence of discarnate beings... but perhaps that's too big a leap.

What's irritating is the persistent lack of interest in a wealth of human experience that has been recorded for thousands of years. People do see and have seen ghosts (or hear

them, or smell them) with alarming frequency. And UFOs. And poltergeists. And monsters and fairies and - oh my!

Are all these people hallucinating? If so, that too is profoundly interesting and worthy of research. Are we all walking round in a state where at any moment we might experience an hallucination? I think we'd all like to know if that's the case. But for my money 'hallucination' is as vague a term as 'ghost'. Worse, it's a handy get-out.

'A potentially invaluable line of research is likely to be avoided. Which is a pity, because so much of what we call supernatural might in fact be entirely natural.'

I suppose the problem is that so-called paranormal experience is seen as too close to religious experience and belief. And Science had a tough battle with Religion during the Renaissance, and that's never been forgotten, no sir.

So it's ironic that our favourite scientists, the Quantum Physicists, keep pushing science into the realm of the supernatural. Now they're talking about teleporting energy across vast distances of space instantly just because certain atoms were once friendly with certain other atoms. Or something.

Perhaps a campaign should be started to rename Quantum Physics to what it actually is - magic. Or perhaps that should be Magick with a 'k' (and a capital 'M'). We could make it even grander by shoving an 'e' on the end and making it Magicke. Ooh, and let's have a 'y', as well. Yes, from now on we should have Professors of Magycke. I like the sound of that.

And it makes just as much sense.

Richard Holland, Editor



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Paranormal News

The latest from the world of weird

[SOURCE: Reuters, Jan 25, quoting *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, January 2010.]

Children hear ghostly voices

Research has shown that nearly 1 in 10 seven- to eight-year-olds hear voices that aren't really there.

Needless to say, this extraordinary study, carried out by Dutch psychologists, doesn't mention ghosts or even ESP - 'hallucinations' is the only given explanation in the news report, at least as to why 9% of the sample children reported hearing disembodied voices.

According to Agna A. Bartels-Velthuis, of University Medical Center Groningen, in The Netherlands, up to 16% of mentally healthy children and teens may hear disembodied voices from time to time.

In her article in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* Bartels-Velthuis said that although hearing voices can signal a heightened risk of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders in later life, the 'great majority' of youngsters who have these experiences never become mentally ill.

'These voices in general have a limited impact in daily life,' she told the Reuters news agency. 'In most cases the voices will just disappear.'

She added that parents of children who hear voices should not be overly concerned: 'I would advise them to reassure their child and to watch him or her closely,' she said.

The investigation into 'auditory vocal

hallucinations' involved 3,870 primary school children in Groningen. The children were asked whether they had heard 'one or more voices that only you and no one else could hear' in the past year.

Nine percent of the children answered yes. But only 19% of those who said yes added that the voices were sufficiently

'Is it possible (the voices) are coming from a source outside rather than inside the child's head? To put it bluntly, are the youngsters in this study hearing ghosts?'

disruptive to 'interfere with their thinking', while 15% found them distressing.

Boys and girls were equally likely to report hearing voices, but girls were more likely to report feeling anxiety due to the voices.

Those of us interested in the paranormal can't help but find this research interesting. What is the true source of these 'hallucinations'? Is it possible that they are coming from a source outside rather than inside the child's head? It has often been noted that young children are more sensitive to psychic impressions - to put it bluntly, are the youngsters in this study

hearing ghosts? Generally speaking, ghost noises (footsteps, bangs, taps etc) are more commonly reported than visual apparitions.

The research also has relevance to the growing interest in the possible paranormal origin of childhood imaginary friends. And then there's the possibility of ESP being involved. Are these children picking up the inner voices of people nearby? Notably, children living in urban environments were more likely to report hearing several voices at once.

Of course, there is another way of looking at the study's relevance to paranormal research. If nearly 10% of the population are prone

to auditory hallucinations when they are children, how many of them will later be prone to hearing inexplicable noises as adults - especially when they believe themselves to be in a haunted house or are taking part in a ghost hunt?

Bartels-Velthuis and her team are now conducting a five-year follow-up study of the children to see how the voice-hearing plays out and what effect, if any, it has on their behaviour.

Paranormal Shorts



KIWI FILES

New Zealand has become the latest nation to announce that it will release to the public secret military files on UFO sightings. Hundreds of documents are currently held by Archives New Zealand and were to have been made public in January, but the Defence Force is removing personal information from them to comply with the Privacy Act. The Defence Force announced: 'We are hoping to be able to release a copy of all the UFO files within the year.' Most anticipated is the file on the Kaikoura sighting in December 1978 in which lights were tracked on radar and filmed by a news crew.

[SOURCE: stuff.co.nz, Jan 23]

'MUTANT' BODY

A strange human body has been found washed ashore on an island 100 miles north-east of New York city where the US Government studies dangerous diseases. Police say a security guard discovered the clothed, decomposing corpse in a restricted part of Plum Island. The body is said to be 'that of a white male about 6-feet tall with a large build and "very long" fingers. It is already being described as the body of a "mutant" on mystery web sites. According to authorities, there were no obvious signs of trauma but an autopsy will be conducted by a Suffolk County medical examiner to determine an exact cause of death.

[SOURCE: WPIX.com, Jan 19]

HOPE FOR LIFE

Nasa's Cassini spacecraft has flown past Saturn's sixth-largest moon, Enceladus, and encountered plumes thrown up by ice volcanoes. In these plumes it detected negatively charged water molecules, which on Earth is produced only where water is moving, such as in waterfalls or crashing ocean waves. Scientists believe this is strong evidence of underground water on Enceladus. If so, the moon could have the conditions necessary to sustain life. Other ingredients for life, such as carbon, and a source of heat to keep the water liquid, were also detected. Cassini has been orbiting Saturn and studying its rings and moons since 2004.

[SOURCE: Telegraph, Feb 9]

Coleman among speakers at big cat confab

The 2010 Big Cats in Britain Conference is to be held in Glasgow on the weekend of June 4-6. Speakers so far confirmed include Loren Coleman, all the way from the USA and Ruby Lang and Mike Williams, all the way from Australia, plus English and Scottish researchers Di Francis, Dr David Hetherington, Jonathan McGowan and Shaun Stevens. One-day tickets are priced at £25, and for the entire three days £40. Full details can be found at www.bigcatsinbritain.org/2010conference.htm



WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Psychologists have announced that a significant proportion of seven- and eight-year-olds regularly hear voices that aren't really there.

BEWARE the Buckshaw Beast

Residents of a housing estate in Lancashire are being stalked by a mysterious animal - or not.



According to the *Daily Mail* and local papers in Lancashire, a large, furry critter has been prowling around Buckshaw Village, a modern housing estate on the edge of Leyland. Dubbed the Buckshaw Beast, it has been variously described as wolf-like, hyaena-like or resembling a cross between a wild boar and a big cat.

A rogue wild boar, driven into the estate through hunger brought on by the recent snows, was suggested as a possible identity of the Beast. But then it was announced that several deer had been found mauled to death, and that would be very unusual boar behaviour.

The creature has been reported by several residents over the past few months as being seen rummaging through their bins. Tony Kenig told the *Leyland Guardian* that he found rubbish strewn all over his garden one night and then spotted the culprit - something like a 'dark-coloured hyaena' standing on its hind legs as it snuffled in his bin.

Another resident claimed he also saw it in his bin and that his two German Shepherds - former police dogs - were cowering in their kennel through terror of the thing. He warned Buckshaw residents to be vigilant - the Beast could be dangerous.

Finally, another resident, John Russell, sent his local paper a picture of the Buckshaw Beast (reproduced

here) which he said he'd snapped using his mobile phone. The picture, though fuzzy, is clear enough to show that it isn't a boar. It does indeed look more like a hyaena, or maybe a bear. Or maybe it's just a big dog. Maybe, in fact, it's a Newfoundland called Troy going for a walk near his home on Dartmoor.

Excellent research carried out by Steve Mera and members of the Centre for Fortean Zoology has cold poured water on much of the Buckshaw saga. The CFZ tracked down this photograph as one submitted as long ago as 2007 as a possible picture of the Beast of Dartmoor. The owners of Troy spotted the photo when it was then reproduced and said it looked very like their big, shaggy pet - they live very close to where the picture was taken.

The CFZ also viewed a photo submitted to a Lancashire newspaper of a deer allegedly mutilated by the Buckshaw Beast - they believe it to be a hoax, already dead when it was chopped about. *Paranormal Magazine's* own investigations revealed that the Buckshaw Beast and its alleged attacks on deer had been unknown to residents contributing to the online Buckshaw Village forum until the newpaper reported it. None of the contributors seemed to take the story seriously.

So what of the Buckshaw Beast? Read the CFZ's full report here and decide for yourself: <http://forteanzoology.blogspot.com/2010/01/kirst-d-raven-buckshaw-beast.html>

[SOURCE: *Leyland Guardian*, Jan 20 / *Mail Online* Jan 21 / CFZ.org]

JOAN'S BONES

The relics of Joan of Arc which have been held with reverence in Chinon, France, for over a century have been shown to be fake.

The bottle labeled 'Remains found under the pyre of Joan of Arc, maiden of Orleans,' first surfaced in 1867 and have been in the care of the Archbishop of Tours ever since. Forensic studies have now shown that the charred remains inside it belong to a mummified cat from ancient Egypt. Powdered mummies were extensively used as cure-alls in early medicine and this is probably the true origin of the bottle.

[SOURCE: msnbc.com, Jan 20]

BOMB DOWSING

The British government has banned the export to Iraq and Afghanistan of so-called 'bomb detectors' which have no useful electronic parts.

The AOE-651 detector, manufactured by a private firm in Somerset, has no batteries and consists of a swivelling aerial mounted to a hinge on a hand-grip. Critics have described it as 'a glorified dowsing rod'. Owner of the company, Jim McCormick, has told the BBC: 'The theory behind dowsing and the theory behind how we actually detect explosives is very similar.' Scientific tests have found no evidence they work but the Iraqi government has already spent £52m on them. They cost over £25,000 each.

[SOURCE: Caroline Hawley & Meirion Jones, BBC, Jan 22]

'IT'S A THING, A THING!'

Journalist Chris Lloyd has written about a friend's tussle with a ghost at her home in Darlington in the north-east of England. The unnamed woman was aware that her house, built in the 1920s, might be haunted. Her youngest child would cry out in the night and when she went to comfort her, she would 'smell an old man behind her'.

One night she was alone in the house with her mid-teens daughter. Suddenly she heard her daughter shriek out, 'There's something in the utility room!' The terrified girl ran back into the front room. On impulse the mother slammed the door shut, wedging it with her foot, assuming there was an intruder in the house. 'It's not a man, mummy,' screamed the girl. 'It's white and tall and it came from behind me and stood beside me. It's a thing, a thing!'

The doorknob began to turn and the mother struggled with whatever it was as it pulled on the other side, trying to get in. After a long minute or so the doorknob was released. Eventually the frightened mum and daughter peeped out. There was nothing to be seen, but the utility room - usually one of the warmest in the house - was so cold they could see their breath.

[SOURCE: Chris Lloyd, Northern Echo, Jan 20]

More Paranormal News →

Benevolent or belligerent?

An evolutionary scientist has warned that any extraterrestrials who come to Earth are likely to share humans' aggressive and greedy tendencies.

Simon Conway Morris, professor of evolutionary paleobiology at Cambridge University, has warned that governments should prepare for the worst if aliens ever visit Earth. Speaking at a Royal Society Conference in London on extraterrestrial life, Professor Conway Morris gave scant hope to optimists who hope for benevolent aliens with superior morals as well as superior technology.

He said that it was far more likely that extra-terrestrials would share human failings such as greed and violence, as well as a tendency to exploit others' resources. Even if they do come in peace, he said, they will probably be colonists seeking somewhere to live and will cheerfully help themselves to Earth's resources, like water, minerals and fuel.

"They could be disturbingly like us, and that might not be a good thing - we don't have a great record."

'My view is that Darwinian evolution is really quite predictable, and when you have a biosphere and evolution takes over, then common themes emerge and the same is true for intelligence,' he told *The Guardian* newspaper in advance of his lecture. 'If you have a planet much smaller than ours, the gravity is so weak it loses its atmosphere. If the planet is much bigger, its gravity is so strong that everything crawls around on the ground, because you don't have to fall far to break everything. It's fantastically dull.'

'[Visiting] extra-terrestrials ... won't be splodges of glue ... they could be disturbingly like us, and that might not be a good thing - we don't have a great record.'

Prof Conway Morris's lecture was part of a two-day conference held by the Royal Society to mark the 50th anniversary of the SETI program. Various experts discussed how we might detect life on distant planets and what that could mean for society.

SPACE INVADERS: Two professors at a Royal Society Conference have painted a gloomy picture of our first contact with alien visitors. Pictured is a poster promoting a sci-fi movie released in 1956, at the height of the Cold War.



Another speaker, Albert Harrison, a professor of psychology at the University of California, also added a note of concern in his address on the radio signals we are busy pumping into space. He wondered whether we might be sending out the wrong kind of messages to alien eavesdroppers. If nothing else, they might clearly show our own technological inferiority.

'I do think there's a risk,' said Prof Harrison. 'The attitude seems to be they're friendly, they're a long way away, and they can't get here. But if you wake up one morning and an armada of extraterrestrial spaceships are circling Earth, that prediction won't necessarily hold.' [SOURCE: *The Guardian*, Jan 25]

'Take me to your teacher'

[SOURCE: thisisbristol.co.uk, Jan 29]

A school project intended to stimulate young minds at Yatton Junior School, near Bristol, started an alien invasion rumour throughout the village.

Teachers made up a story of an alien craft landing on their playing fields to help teach students journalistic skills. To add to the fun, circular scorch marks in a triangular pattern were created on the school playing field.

The next day 90 Year 6 students were told an elaborate story about the alien invasion: how the caretaker, Steve Chard, had found the scorch marks and silvery 'alien matter' after the alarm went off and then called the police, who cordoned off the area. To really make it convincing, even the police joined in. Community support officer Kate Turner talked to the children about her

investigation of the event and photos were shown of a flying saucer hovering over the school.

But some teachers forgot to reveal the story was made up when the classes were over. The 10 and 11-year-olds therefore went home and told their parents all about it. Soon the story was all round the village and by the time the local newspaper was contacted by concerned residents all sorts of further details had been added.

Red-faced teacher Phil Okeden, who co-ordinated the event, and used a blow-torch to make the scorch marks, said: 'I must admit I did forget to mention to students that the story was fabricated at the end of the lesson.'

PCSO Turner added: 'Obviously we all told the tale far too well.'

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Haiti's 'devil pact'

In this **Paranormal News** special, expert on modern witchcraft **Dr LEO RUICKBIE** examines the legend that inspired a bizarre and callous comment from an American preacher in response to the Haiti earthquake.

Speaking only hours after the earthquake that devastated Haiti, American evangelist Pat Robertson shocked the world by blaming it on the Haitians' supposed pact with the Devil. Appearing on the US television channel, the Christian Broadcasting Network, on January 6, Robertson told viewers that the Haitians 'got together and swore a pact to the Devil'.

Robertson explained that the Haitians had allegedly told the Devil that, 'We will serve you if you will get us free from the French. And the Devil said, "OK, it's a deal".' Haiti was a French colony until granted independence in 1804. Despite their freedom, Robertson believes that the Haitians 'have been cursed by one thing after the other' ever since.

The Christian Broadcasting Network immediately denied that Robertson 'stated that the earthquake was God's wrath'. A spokesman explained that Robertson's comments were based on a legend that Haitian rebels had made a pact with the Devil in return for victory over the French.

It is widely believed in Haiti that a Voodoo ceremony held in 1791 instigated the slave rebellion that eventually led to the country's independence. According to the story, a Voodoo priest called Boukman performed a ritual before hundreds of people on the night of August 14 at Bois Caïman in northern Haiti.

In the 1950s, the influential native Haitian historian Dantès Bellegrade described the ceremony as having involved wild dancing, animal sacrifice and blood drinking in the midst of a dramatic thunderstorm. Other accounts vary as to what took place.

'It took little stretch of certain Christian imaginations to turn the ritual into a Satanic ceremony.'

Anthropologist Markel Thylefors recently recorded an oral tradition recounting the sacrifice of a French prisoner. The consensus is that it was a black pig, the animal sacred to the Voodoo spirit Ezili Dantò, whose fearsome reputation has led some to regard it as evil.

However, no contemporary sources mention Bois Caïman nor the ritual supposed to have taken place there. It was Frenchman Antoine Dalmas, writing more than ten years after the alleged event in 1814, who described an animal sacrifice taking place at Bois Caïman, but on the night of August 21. This later became conflated with a documented political gathering of slaves on August 14 near Morne Rouge some ten kilometres away.

Despite these historical difficulties, the Bois Caïman ritual has become an integral part of Haitian national identity, especially now. Outlawed after 1804, Voodoo only became officially recognised as a religion in Haiti in 2003 and to mark the country's bicentennial in 2004 public ceremonies were held at the site.

It took little stretch of certain Christian imaginations to turn the Bois Caïman ritual into a Satanic ceremony and not everyone has condemned Robertson's comments. A minister in Northern Ireland, the Rev Jonathan Campbell, said 'my personal conviction is that the evil spirits are responsible for the earthquake'. Gary Cass, chairman and CEO of the Christian Anti-Defamation Commission, said Robertson's remarks were 'well within the bounds of historic Christian theology'.

Robertson is no stranger to controversy. The 79-year-old had earlier blamed Hurricane Katrina, which killed 1,800 people, on God's wrath.

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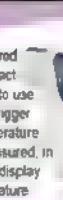


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sightings

GHOSTS



PARANORMAL PUB: Paul Donnor who owns the Park Gate Inn at Cannock Wood, Staffordshire, believes his premises are "a hotbed of paranormal activity." Reports of "ghostly figures, floating orbs and inexplicable temperature changes" have been reported by staff and visitors. The Park Gate Inn stands only 500 yards away from Castle Ring, the Iron Age hill fort said by some to be "one of the most mystical places in England." Strange music and ghostly entities have been reported from the area. But Mr Donnor believes the haunting at the inn could be attributed to the death of a former owner in 1969. (Source: *Sunday Mercury* 13th January 2010).

SUICIDE CELL: Prisoners at HMP Brinsford near Wolverhampton are "terrified of entering a possessed cell" after two "near identical suicides" in less than a year. Now hardened criminals are insisting that a priest be called in to perform an exorcism. Details of the previous suicides are not available but an inside source said that one of the former occupants of the cell was a "devil worshipper." The deaths were on the same day and at the same time. A Prison Service spokesman said there was "no truth" in suggestions that an exorcism was planned. (Source: *Sunday Mercury* 18th January 2010).

EXTRA GUESTS: The Boutique Hotel in Edinburgh's old town, not far from Mary Kings Close has been experiencing some odd occurrences lately. The underground cellar was recently opened during renovations and now staff report feeling "an odd chill" when there. Others have reported "hearing strange bumps coming from behind the door." The hotel is only yards from the underground network of tunnels where plague victims were rumoured to have been buried alive. Mark Turner, paranormal investigator for Ghost Finders Scotland, said: "There is a huge amount of history and tales of human suffering linked to old Edinburgh." (Source: *Deadline Scotland* 1st February 2010).

22-FACED: A picture was taken at the Sammy Marks Museum in Pretoria, South Africa, which is said to show the ghost of a Scotsman who in life was a friend of the Marks family. The group of people who assembled for the photograph numbered 21, but the actual picture shows 22 people, or rather just an extra face. There is also "an extra hand" in the photograph! The Scotsman in life is said to have looked after children in the building during the 1800s. His ghost is well known and it has a tendency to tease lady visitors." (Source: www.southafrica.net 26th January 2010).

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS: The story goes that in the 1930s a woman with a baby in her arms jumped to her death from the Skirvin Hotel in Oklahoma. Staff and visitors have reported seeing "ghosts and hearing strange noises" throughout the years. Football team the Knicks recently blamed their recent stay at the hotel for their games loss. The players

had trouble sleeping because of their fear of the "ghosts." Coach Jerry Jeffries said: "I definitely believe it, the place is haunted. It's scary." The occurrences include a woman screaming, a maid's cart rolling on its own, female voices, furniture moving of its own accord, and propositions by the spirit of a female prostitute. (Source: *Daily News* 12th January).

ATTIC ANTONICS: The ghost of a little girl is said to haunt the fourth-floor attic of the empty Goodale House along Sandbar Ferry Road, Augusta, Georgia. Paranormal investigators brought a doll and placed it in the room in the hope of attracting the spirit on a recent investigation. The doll was surrounded by cameras and microphones in the hope of catching any movement or sounds. The girl is often seen looking forlornly out of the window but nobody knows who she is. Mr Sims, the present owner of the house, which was built in 1799, said: "The house definitely has a supernatural presence to it; you can just feel it when you come in here. It's wonderful." Nothing was caught on the cameras. (Source: *The Augusta Chronicle* 21st January).

FRIENDLY PHANTOMS: From the moment Martha Rixten moved into her home on Wolfe Island, Lake Ontario, 30 years ago she knew it was haunted. She said: "I felt I wasn't alone here. I felt surrounded by a loving energy." Today the friendly ghosts are still there and very active. Footsteps as though someone is wearing heavy work boots are often heard on the third floor. Other apparitions include three ladies in the bathroom (1) and a little boy. Mrs Rixten has now put the property up for sale, not because of the visitors but simply because it is time for them to move on. (Source: *National Post* 24th January).

CREepy THEATRE: The Hippodrome in Waco, Texas, has been experiencing some odd goings-on of late. Strange figures have been seen on the catwalk, "strange mists, and eerie voices" are some of the phenomena that has been recorded. The McLennan County Paranormal Investigations (MCPI) team were called in for an investigation and certified the building as haunted. But box office manager Cristina Uptmore said: "In a theatre you hear things and it's an old building. It's creaky. I have never attributed it to paranormal activity, but it creeps you out just the same." (Source: *Lariat news* January 2010).

SEDUCTIVE HITCHER: A female ghost named by locals as Catherine has been frightening motorists in the Black Woods in Down, eastern Maine. She is dressed in a "light blue evening or ball gown" and even has the hill she haunts named after her. Catherine is said to have lost her head in a car accident and now tries to hitch a ride by standing in the road "seductively". She even talks to the drivers who dare to stop, saying: "I want to go to Bar Harbor." Of course, she disappears from the car when they reach the bottom of the hill. (Source: www.wobi.tv 1st February).

HAUNTED HOTEL: Hotel Niagara in East Java, Indonesia, is usually avoided by locals because of the frightening apparitions that haunt it. The local legend is that a Dutch woman committed suicide by throwing

Have you had a Sighting? Please let us know if you have seen a ghost, UFO, mystery beast or anything else strange and inexplicable. Send the details of your sighting to: editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or visit www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk

herself off one of the balconies, while others say she had been brutally raped and murdered by Japanese soldiers during World War 2. The fifth floor "is so riddled with malevolent ghosts" that it was closed to the public. One room in the hotel is said to fill with blood at night and it is claimed that guests may not wake up in the place where they went to sleep. But staff say they have seen nothing at the hotel. Ratti, who works in reception, said: "I've been here for seven years. I stay in the hotel 24 hours a day and I've never seen anything strange, and neither have any guests I know of." (Source: *The Jakarta Globe* 12th January).



UFOs

KENT: A witness spotted strange lights in the sky on the 6th of February over Princess Park in Walderslade, and reports: "I was turning off the TV and was just about to go to sleep when I looked out the window and saw two objects rising above the valley. At first I thought they were aircraft but they were travelling too fast. After about 10 seconds another appeared and they started moving around for another 30 seconds, then they disappeared. About five minutes later two more appeared and then they disappeared." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk February 2010).

WORCESTERSHIRE: On the 7th of February a lady spotted a strange light over Redditch: "I was walking my dog and heard some teenagers shout 'UFO!' I looked up and saw a bright orange light travelling at the speed of a helicopter. I thought it was the police helicopter, but I have seen this many times with its searchlight on, and this light was a different light, also it had no sound. I managed to take a photo on my mobile. I went to take another and it disappeared, it was a clear night and what clouds there were were high, this was flying well below the clouds. I have no idea what it could've been but I know it was definitely not a Chinese lantern!" (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk February 2010).

SOUTH WALES: Witness noticed a bright orange light from their window in Ystrad, South Wales, on the 7th of February, and reports: "At first I thought it was a reflection of a street lamp on the window itself but when I looked I could see that it was in the sky in roughly the direction of Tesco (I live in the centre of town). I watched it for as long as I could and did video it with my mobile phone. The weird thing is that about ten seconds before it went out of view (obscured by buildings) the light went out and I could clearly see with the naked eye that it was a dark object." (Source: www.uk-ufo.co.uk February 2010).

IRELAND: Footage described as "amazing" was taken of a triangular formation of lights over the River Liffey in Dublin. Nick Pope commented: "The video seems to have been taken through a night scope and presumably shows things not visible to the naked eye. It appears to show a structured craft moving at incredible speed. The configuration of the lights is unlike any aircraft I've ever seen. It's either some secret prototype aircraft or drone,"

or something considerably more exotic." Other researchers in the area are not frightened to claim that the video shows an alien space craft. You can view the footage via www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk/videos (Source: *The Sun* 21st January).

PENNSYLVANIA: On the 13th of January a witness, while driving down Route 413 in Buckingham, Pennsylvania noticed "a bright star in the sky slowly descending", until he lost sight of it behind a tree line. Then he saw what seemed to be an explosion in the place where he last saw the light, the flash lit up the whole of the night sky. On the 14th a "round, black object with a big white light in the centre, and red lights around the side" was spotted on Swamp Road, Route 590. The witness states that the UFO was "the size of four two-story houses" and that four other cars pulled over to watch it. (Source: MUFON 13th and 14th January).

CALIFORNIA 1: A "blue, blinking marching UFO" over Tracy, California, has got residents puzzled and several called News 10 as well as local police. One witness reports: "The lights appeared to travel high in the sky and turn off and then quickly appear close to the ground. The lights at times blinked on and off intermittently near the Tracy Defence Depot." A police spokesman said that the police department has received many calls of similar blue lights over the last few months. (Source: *News 10*, 12th January).

CALIFORNIA 2: On the 13th of January a witness in Redwood, California, reported to MUFON: "I was outside playing with my son on our deck, and noticed a dark shape hovering about a mile south. When I went to photograph it, I could see it in the view finder but it didn't appear after taking several shots. Soon after that I watched it almost jump over to Redwood City, then I went back into my house to grab another camera and was able to take several photos of the object before it vanished." (Source: MUFON 15th January 2010).

WISCONSIN LIGHTS: For two nights in a row reports of UFOs in Barron County were made by residents and reported to the police, although authorities say the incidents are nothing unusual. On the 4th of January witnesses watched blue and green lights in the sky for 15 minutes near Prairie Farm. On the 5th similar lights were observed at the same location bouncing "up and down in the sky." Police identified them "as satellites or airplanes." (Source: MUFON 18th January).

NEWFOUNDLAND: Residents in a small rural community in Newfoundland, Canada, saw "a missile-like object soaring through the sky." Now locals are frustrated at not getting an official explanation. Darlene Stewart took photographs of the object, which unfortunately are blurred but seem to show a "round, long object." It rose from the ocean with smoke or flames coming from the back but made no noise. A police investigation was conducted, and Sgt Edgecombe reported "we confirmed that it was something," but apparently the police are not at liberty to say what that something was. (Source: *CBC News* 27th January).

MEXICO: On the 18th of January a Mexican Airline Bus came within 200 metres of a "large metallic spherical object" as it came to land at Xochimilco. The object changed

colours from "a grey aluminium to a brilliant red." Reports in Spanish state that the "airship" then flew off towards the South of Mexico City. (Source: *analuisacid.com* 20th January).

HAITI: UFOs were observed and caught on video prior to the recent earthquake. Among the witnesses were American missionaries who videoed them. Rumours are awash on the Internet that the earthquake was caused by project HAARP as part of its "human reduction programme." (Source: *Phantoms and Monsters* January 2010).



THE SUN: On the 18th of January "huge spherical UFOs 'orbiting the sun'" were photographed by NASA's Stereo Spacecraft. Observers say the objects; some as big as Earth, seemed to shine as if metallic. (Source: *getxnews.com* January 2010).

CREATURES

CAT COLLISION: A couple driving home to Comrie from Alloa along the A90 in Fife, hit what they believe to have been a big cat, they describe as being sandy-coloured and around 2 1/2 feet tall, 3-4 feet long, with a tail of approximately 2 1/2 feet. They thought they had killed the animal as they were driving at about 50mph. They stopped the car further along the road, and went to check for a body, but could see nothing in the dark. Hairs were recovered from the vehicle by Big Cats in Britain and they are currently undergoing DNA testing. (Source: *Big Cats in Britain* January 2010).

SEWER MONSTER: Even today workers report the presence of a "frightening, shuffling figure" in the Sussex Water Treatment and Waste Management Plant, according to *unexplainable.net*. Some describe the figure as a "zombie", as it stalks workers in the dark tunnels. If a flash light is shone at the figure, it apparently stops and watches in silence. On other occasions voices have been heard in low whispers, suggesting that there is more than one zombie stalking subterranean Sussex. (Source: *Chris Capps, unexplainable.net* January 2010).

CANNOCK WOLF: Further reports of mystery animals have come from the Chase in Staffordshire. Jane McNally saw what she believed was a mystery animal on the hills, and reports: "I was walking with my partner and his dog; we put the dog back on the lead as we thought in the distance there was an enormous 'dog'. As we approached the animal we realised it wasn't a dog and it just stared at us for a while - I said I thought it looked like a fox, but the size of a lioness - it then turned into the wooded area, and we proceeded to walk on." Jane later identified the animal as a wolf. Other people in the area have also reported sighting the strange creature, including Peter Derbyshire, who was driving towards Pottal Pool. He said he glimpsed the animal from 30 yards away. He is adamant that it was not a cat and that it had dog characteristics. (Source: *The Morning Star, Sunday Mercury* 22nd January).

CAMMIE: Cammie, of Lake Cameron, on Vancouver Island in BC, Canada, has allegedly been caught on video by local resident Kim McDonald, who reports: "At first I just thought it was a bird skimming across the water.

There was an enormous splash, like when someone jumps into the water, where the splash had been there was now a large object. The head, if that's what it was, was huge, bigger than a beaver, I grabbed my camera and hopped on top of my truck." Mrs McDonald caught two seconds of footage, switched to camera mode and took a still photograph. The object then submerged and never reappeared. (Source: *Parksville Qualicum Beach News* 8th January).

'FROSTQUATCH': Footage of what is said to be a white Bigfoot was captured by a home owner in an undisclosed location in Pennsylvania. Residents have recently reported a string of sightings and strange noises in the night. The film was taken after the home owner heard a disturbance outside. The footage shows him running through the woods and then capturing a fleeting glance of an eerie figure running away. The film can be seen via www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk/videos (Source: *Phantoms & Monsters* January 2010).

CHUPACABRA?: Cesar Garcia and brother-in-law Juan Miranda have begun experiencing strange things around their home near Horizon City in El Paso County, Texas. Their cat hid for a week on their roof, all their rabbits disappeared and 30 chickens were killed by an unknown something. Garcia said: "I saw the chickens were dead, but there was no blood around the sheet metal, all of them were just dead in one big pile. But, really, I don't know what it was because there was no blood." The attacker left tracks that included a paw and a heel, and looked like Chupacabras' tracks they found on the Internet. "We followed them all the way past the trailer, then over the fence. We walked about four blocks and then the footprints vanished." (Source: *El Paso Times* 12th January).

MYSTERY MARSUPIAL: Andrew Bligh of the Don Valley, Yarra, Australia, spotted a strange creature and reports: "I have been working in the bush pretty much all of my life, but I have never seen anything like this before. It was as large as a Rottweiler, but with a different, stocky build." He said all four shoulders were of the same height, and it glided along the roadside. He thinks it might be "a marsupial of some type, but something bigger than what we commonly see." Other people believe he saw a big cat. (Source: *Lilydale & Yarra Valley Leader* 18th January).

WHAT A CROC: Several reports of a saltwater croc living in the Gold Coast Canal, Australia, have been dismissed as "improbable" by Clive Cook of the Department of Environment and Resource, even though it has been photographed by a tourist. He said: "We've had recent sighting reports, but each one of those have been followed up and never been substantiated as a confirmed sighting. I've had a look at the photograph and I've had extensive experience in crocodile management. When you look closely at the photograph it clearly is not a crocodile - I would be 99 per cent sure." The tourist reported that the croc was hunting ducks. (Source: www.news.com.au 21st January).

Sightings
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of the research
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PSYCHIC DETECTIVES

It's not unusual to hear of people claiming clairvoyant powers adding their voices to ongoing crime cases. Do they help or hinder? **JONATHAN TAPSELL** investigates.

police hunt killer

HOUSE OF HORROR

WOMAN'S BOD

Psychic claims 'visions'



WHEN POLICE INVESTIGATIONS seem impossible to solve and fail to make headway who do detectives turn to? The answer may surprise you. Sometimes they turn to psychics.

Police departments across the world regularly use psychics and clairvoyants to help clear up some of the most difficult investigations, although they do not always publicly acknowledge such tactics. In some cases psychics have cracked unsolvable crimes in minutes; it has also been known for crimes to be foretold before they actually happen, much to the surprise and relief of law enforcement agencies.

One such case involved a lady called Dorothy Nickerson, who lived in Arizona. While dreaming one November night in 1982, Dorothy had a vision of a robbery being committed by two men, one of whom wore a distinctive Mexican-style moustache. The next day, shaken by the strange dream, she realised that the robbery had been shown to her as taking place at a local store, the Circle K. The vision had also revealed a specific time: 12.15 am.

Dorothy became convinced as she recalled the details of her dream that it was a warning of an impending robbery that would soon take place in her town. Should she ring the police to warn them? Eventually, Dorothy contacted the store owner, who listened and then hung up. Minutes later the police contacted Dorothy to reassure her that her vision had been taken seriously by them and would be

acted upon. As a result, a man sporting a Mexican-style moustache was arrested outside Circle K just after midnight carrying a gun. No trace was found of any accomplice.

Dorothy Nickerson believed that if the police had waited a few minutes later, at 12.15 am as the dream had indicated, both men would have been arrested.

Not everyone encounters such open-minded police officers. In 1977 Britain's best known 'psychic detective' Robert Cracknell received overwhelming impressions of a very serious crime, the rape and murder of Australian Janie Shepard, whose body was found in her car on Wheathampstead Common, Hertfordshire. The case became known as the Red Mini Car Murder. Cracknell, a tall, dark, tough-looking Londoner, has never contacted police himself: rather, third parties have reported what he has received via psychic channels and not always with his knowledge.

A journalist interviewing Cracknell on another matter by chance discussed the Janie Shepard case. Cracknell mentioned he was surprised the police considered the victim as not being sexually active.

'DOROTHY BECAME CONVINCED HER DREAM WAS A WARNING OF AN IMPENDING ROBBERY THAT WOULD SOON TAKE PLACE IN HER TOWN. SHOULD SHE RING THE POLICE TO WARN THEM?'

HIGH PROFILE: Robert Cracknell is the UK's best-known psychic detective and for many years he ran a successful investigation and security business. © Robert Cracknell



Illustration © Alan Friswell



'THE INFORMATION HAD BEEN WITHHELD FROM THE PUBLIC. OFFICERS CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ANYONE WITH SO MUCH INFORMATION ON THE CRIME MUST SURELY BE THE KILLER.'

because he had had an overriding impression of a contraceptive coil lying on the back seat of the mini. Later the journalist relayed this unusual conversation to investigating officers. The information about the contraceptive coil had been withheld from the public and was known only to the police. The officers came to the

conclusion that anyone with so much information on the crime must surely be the killer.

A telegram was dispatched by the journalist warning Cracknell that detectives were on their way to arrest him on suspicion of murder. Upon their arrival, the detectives' fears were soon allayed, however, learning that Cracknell was well known as a psychic. Instead of arresting him, they asked for his help. In response, Cracknell told them he had had a psychic impression that the killer was a West Indian man with a scar on his cheek who was already serving a prison sentence. Years later a West Indian man with a scar on his cheek was indeed charged with the Janie Shepard murder upon his release from prison.

Bob Cracknell later became involved in other high profile criminal cases. Perhaps his most startling predictions were those involving the Yorkshire Ripper, a serial killer who stalked the North of England between 1975 and 1981. The Ripper's victims were women of all ages and walks of life but many were prostitutes who were easy prey for such a killer. Detectives were convinced they were looking for a man from Sunderland in the North East, having been misled by a hoax tape sent to the police.

Cracknell, however, going completely against the police theories, declared from his home in London to the *Daily Mirror* newspaper that the killer was in fact from Bradford in Yorkshire. The *Yorkshire Post* decided to follow up

PSYCHIC SEARCH:
Contrary to police opinion at the time, Robert Cracknell was convinced the Yorkshire Ripper came from Bradford. He took a national newspaper reporter along with him to the city to search for evidence.

stop a car and arrest a man without knowing the full importance of their enquiry. Sutcliffe was indeed arrested by traffic police and later declared while in custody:

'You don't know whom you've arrested. I am the Ripper.'

Stunned police had finally got their man.

Dutch psychic Peter Hurkos was called upon by police to help with the Bianca/Tate murders in Hollywood. This killing spree was orchestrated by Charles Manson and his followers high on a cocktail of drug-induced fervour and pseudo-spiritual ramblings. Hurkos correctly picked the name Charlie as the man responsible for the murders but police later terminated Hurkos' involvement. Many questions have since hung over Hurkos and his credentials.

But herein lies the essential problem of psychic detection: who is to be believed and who is not? Charlatans or fame-seekers could potentially waste police time and precious resources.

Perhaps one of the worst fiascos for the British Police was the involvement of medium Doris Stokes, whose descriptions and predictions of the Yorkshire Ripper were repeated in banner headlines in the national tabloids.

'HEREIN LIES THE ESSENTIAL PROBLEM OF PSYCHIC DETECTION: WHO IS TO BE BELIEVED AND WHO IS NOT?'

All of Stokes's predictions proved wrong, leaving many to question the wisdom of using psychics in police investigations. Not unreasonably, police officers felt they could be led down the wrong path and hinder investigations.

One person who has a foot in both camps is Keith Charles, who is both a serving police officer and a practising medium. His own cases of psychic detection include the hunt for the elusive playboy Lord Lucan, who went missing after attacking his nanny Miss Rivett and seriously injuring his wife with a lead pipe.

Charles, while on police duty one evening, went into a relaxed state as he picked up the words 'Lucan' and 'Uckfield' (a village in East Sussex). He then had a vision of a man dressed in a tweed jacket carrying a shotgun. Below him was a dead body secreted in a drain in the grounds of a large country house. His vision seemed to suggest someone had shot the aristocrat and hidden his body.

Following up his psychic vision, ●

CLUED UP: Information involving a red Mini at the centre of a murder case briefly put Robert Cracknell under suspicion with the police

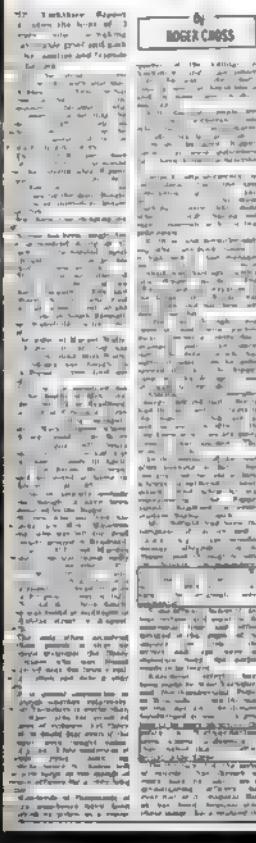
the story because they recognised he had accurately described the city's landmarks; they invited him up to Bradford. Cracknell took the newspaper on a spontaneous tour, following his impressions in and around Bradford. But at a crucial T-junction he turned left instead of right. If he had turned right that day he would have been just a hundred or so metres from the home of Peter Sutcliffe, the man responsible for the murders.

In a statement recorded for the Society of Psychic Research on the insistence of author Colin Wilson, Robert Cracknell correctly foretold the exact nature of the arrest of the Yorkshire Ripper. He said that traffic police would



Why cannot they catch the Ripper?

By ROGER CRESS



MANHUNT: The Yorkshire Ripper was public enemy number one and several self-proclaimed psychics attempted to help the police catch him - in the case of one well-known medium, with a spectacular lack of success. Press cutting reproduced from yorkshireripper.co.uk

12 TIMES THE POLICE LET HIM GO!

I told my chiefs
He's The Ripper
18 months before
they seized him

POLICE SERGEANT SPEAKS OF 'BOLT TO MY HEART'



Jonathan Tapell was born in Sussex in 1964. He has worked as an investigative journalist and filmmaker and is archivist of the world's largest clairvoyant gift collection bequeathed by English Witch Doreen Valliente. He has written books about the occult and true crime and founded the annual Occulture Festival. Jonathan regrets to announce that he has had to cancel his national Prophecy Tour due to unforeseen circumstances.

Charles learnt that Lord Lucan had a connection with a large country house in Gants Hill. He went to Gants Hill to see if the house matched the one in his vision but to his disappointment he discovered that the property had been demolished and new housing built in its place. The disappearance of Lord Lucan remains as mysterious as ever but Charles learnt that he did visit Uckfield on the night of his disappearance. At 1.30am he was at the home of his friends Ian and Susan Maxwell-Scott but was never to be seen again.

One experienced detective with an open mind regarding the use of psychics is John Douglas, the father of behavioural science or criminal profiling. He is founder of FBI Quantico, the world's most advanced lab hunting serial killers. Douglas himself has interviewed over 200 killers, many of whom are serial murderers. The film *Silence of the Lambs* based the character of detective Crawford (actor Scott Glenn) on John Douglas. John

high-profile medium Doris Stokes. It is a very difficult call for police officers, as there are high stakes: potential victims, dangerous perpetrators to bring to justice, and the public wanting results.

'A Comparison of Psychics, Detectives, and Students in the Investigation of Major Crimes' compiled by Martin Reiser, director of the Behavioural Sciences Services Section of the Los Angeles Police Department, concluded that systems should be put in place to monitor the flow of data produced by a psychic

Douglas expressed his own views on the subject:

'Psychics can, on occasion, be helpful to a criminal investigation. I've seen it work. Some of them have the ability to focus subconsciously on particular subtle details at a scene and draw logical conclusions from them, just as I try to do and train my people to do.'

Other colleagues clearly do not agree. For example, Ontario Police Chief Harold Graham, Provincial Police Commissioner of some 41 years standing, has publicly stated: 'A psychic never to my knowledge has solved a case.'

He intimated that their method was formulaic, using vague details to leap onto known clues, perhaps echoing the spectacular failure of

and that the data be evaluated objectively.

Englishman Michael Bromley, who describes himself as a Celtic Shaman, worked with the Los Angeles Police Department to identify trouble spots at the Olympic Games held in the 1980s. His approach was no-nonsense, as he explains:

'It was no use using airy-fairy language; this was for the corporate mind. I had to be specific.'

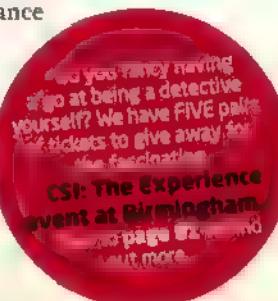
His report was passed onto five major security agencies, including the CIA. Bromley sensed trouble at a place called Westwood. On the opening day of the Olympics a man mowed down 20 pedestrians in his car. Subsequently, at his trial the maniac driver recalled that he had felt waves of negative energy that led him to commit the act.

Bromley's corporate speak may well have satisfied sceptical policemen in this case. But the dividing line between helpful psychic and fame-seeker is not an easy one to determine. One imagines that most juries, too, would be extremely hesitant, if not dubious, to be presented with psychic 'evidence' in a courtroom situation.

If crime fighters choose to involve a psychic they will have to be open-minded, critical

'THE DIRECTOR OF THE BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES SERVICES SECTION OF THE LA POLICE DEPARTMENT CONCLUDED THAT SYSTEMS SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE TO MONITOR THE FLOW OF DATA PRODUCED BY A PSYCHIC AND THAT THE DATA BE EVALUATED OBJECTIVELY.'

and learn how to manage the information provided. Until then an uneasy alliance between law enforcement, the media and those possessing 'the gift' will continue to circle round each other when it comes to the controversial world of psychic detection.●





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THE FIEND BEYOND THE FENCE

In the 1980s the American military were stationed all over Germany. Airmen at a base in the Hunsrück Mountains returned with terrifying tales of a half-human beast - a werewolf - lurking in the woods just beyond the perimeter fence. **CRISPIN ANDREWS** makes an on-the-spot investigation at the scene of the mystery.

BEFORE 1997, few outside Germany had heard of a small town in the Rhineland called Morbach. Set within the Hunsrück Mountains on the edge of the huge Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park, its only claim to fame had been as a hideout for the notorious outlaw Schinderhannes, who terrorised the French occupied region in the late 18th and early 19th century.

But while locals and visitors still eat in restaurants and stay in hotels dedicated to the celebrated Rhenish Dick Turpin; in other parts of the world, Morbach is becoming known, if stories are to be believed, for an altogether more sinister local celebrity.

It's the late 1980s and, with the Cold War not quite over, American forces are still stationed all over Germany. A group of security police are on their way to night duty at Morbach, then one of the biggest nuclear weapons bases on mainland Europe. Like most of their compatriots they know about the country's werewolf legends. Some would have them believe that, with its dark forests and isolated villages, the place is crawling with the creatures. But not until this night did they really believe in such things.

At the edge of town, the men approach a shrine which legend states was erected after the last werewolf was slain in nearby Wittlich 180 years before. Thomas Johannes Baptist Schwytzer, a returning Alsatian deserter

from Napoleon's Moscow army, cursed by the wife of the farmer he murdered, took to the forest as a wolf, killing men and beasts with savage rage. Villagers finally cornered, killed and buried the monster at a crossroads, erecting the shrine within which a candle has burned ever since, protecting locals from further harm. According to the legend, should the flame ever go out, the beast will return.

As the Americans pass, they notice the shrine is unlit. But as this is the 20th century, they joke about the monster, and forget about it. For now.

Duty drags on, the cold forest night its usual uneventful self. So when an alarm goes out at the perimeter fence that cuts through the blanket of tall conifers surrounding the base, the men welcome the chance for action - even if it's just to free another wild boar stuck in the wire mesh.

Seconds after the first guard arrives, a dark shape rears up on its hind legs, and for a few long seconds the awe-struck men stare into the eyes of a huge dog-like creature. The beast takes three giant steps and with a single leap, clears the fence and runs off on all fours into the forest. Reinforcements come with tracker dogs. But when they pick up the scent, the animals panic, shying away from the trail. The soldiers are not too perturbed. The forest at night is not a place for men, and they, like their hounds, are quite happy for this particular intruder to get away. •

LEGENDARY: Germany is rich in legends of men and women able to turn into wolves and in medieval times there were also several cases of marauding killers who genuinely believed they were werewolves



"THE CREATURE THAT WE SAW WAS DEFINITELY AN ANIMAL AND DEFINITELY DOG OR WOLF-LIKE; IT WAS ABOUT SEVEN TO EIGHT FEET TALL."

The world first heard of the Morbach Monster on October 6, 1997, when Professor D. L. Ashliman, of the University of Pittsburgh, published a version of the story as part of his online collection of German werewolf legends. Ashliman never revealed his source but said: 'There have always been "ghost" stories dreamed up by bored security policemen, but this is one I have heard over and over again.'

A year later Ashliman posted an email from an eye-witness, one of the Morbach security policemen: 'The creature that we saw was definitely an animal and definitely dog or wolf-like; it was about seven to eight feet tall.' Once again, Ashliman kept his source to himself.

The south-west corner of Germany, where foreboding coniferous forests and menacing mountain ranges loom over the beautiful Mosel valley, is an ideal

'VILLAGERS CORNERED, KILLED AND BURIED THE MONSTER AT A CROSSROADS, ERECTING A SHRINE WITHIN WHICH A CANDLE HAS BURNED EVER SINCE. ACCORDING TO LEGEND, SHOULD THE FLAME EVER GO OUT, THE BEAST WILL RETURN.'

setting for a werewolf legend. A mysterious carnivorous beast could easily make its home here, keeping clear of the isolated towns and villages scattered around the landscape.

But surely such a creature would show its hand more than once, daring trespassers to enter its forbidden domain. A chance encounter with a hiker or motorist in the dead of night? The occasional unexplained animal carcass, mutilated beyond the capability of any natural predator? Why then, has the Morbach monster never been seen since? Did relighting the candle drive the beast away or is the story simply the work of a gullible academic?

More American service personnel claiming to have been based in the region at the time have since posted their memories of the incident online. One of the Chiefs of Flight Security at the nearby Hahn airbase - now Frankfurt-Hahn Airport - says: 'A couple of my long timers who were there since about '82 or '83 swore they saw the werewolf.'

A security policeman who lived at Hahn Air Base from 1989-1991 insists people on the base believed the tale.

'We called the monster MO-MO,' says another. 'It could have been a large dog, possibly, but many times we heard movements deep in the woods, and loud yowling. The whole place was just damn strange at night.'



Another time, two security police saw a strange animal in the dense undergrowth close to the fence. Too quick for them, the creature left no footprints on the pine needle carpet.

'The animal was very furry and between two and four-foot high,' one witness says. 'There were wild hogs in the area, but I grew up on a farm in the USA and this was no hog.'

Another airman stationed at Hahn claims to have been stalked while walking his dogs by an unseen beast which emitted a wolf-like howl.

The tale of the Morbach Monster has not remained solely with American servicemen. Jamie Hall's book *Half Human Half Animal* and Linda S Godfrey's *Hunting the American Werewolf* mention it, as does Nigel Suckling's *Werewolves*. Stories, poems and blogs inspired by the tale appear on werewolf fan sites and other forums, and a local American football team took the name the Morbach Monsters for a while. American thrash metal band Usurper's *Return of the Werewolf* begins 'Wittlich! Deutschland! Last werewolf slain!' before recounting the return of the cursed Schwytzer, who 'thinks as a man but walks as a wolf' and whose 'spirit haunts the nocturnal landscape'.

Today, American tourists still visit the area, hoping for a glimpse of the famous monster.

MORBACH: The town in the Hunsrück Mountains that has become the centre of a modern werewolf legend. © Crispin Andrews





'A DARK SHAPE REARS UP ON ITS HIND LEGS, AND FOR A FEW LONG SECONDS THE AWE-STRUCK MAN STARED INTO THE EYES OF A HUGE DOG-LIKE CREATURE.'

For locals the story is less convincing. In his book *Das Monster Von Morbach*, Matthias Burgard a teacher at Mainz University, who was raised in Wittlich, claims the tale is an internet myth, probably dreamed up by bored American soldiers fed on stories of German werewolves, and looking for a way to scare new recruits or impress the folks back home.

'The Cold War was almost over

and people who have very little to do, patrolling a spooky place, could come up with a story like this to excite themselves,' he says.

Burgard notices several discrepancies. Thirty-five kilometres separate Wittlich and Morbach, too far to walk, and at the time there were 3,000 French soldiers, not Americans, in Wittlich. The perimeter fence of the old base, now the site of the

Morbach Energy Park and its 14 giant wind turbines, is around 7-feet high, not 12 as claimed by Ashliman's eye-witness, and Burgard can find no mention of the Wittlich werewolf in the German folklore literature he studied.

'People who live here know nothing about the monster,' says Burgard, who believes that any legend must be seen in context of the prevailing ethos. •

BOUNDARY: Behind this fence American airmen stationed at Morbach peered out at something very nasty lurking in the woods. © Crispin Andrews



"MANY TIMES WE HEARD MOVEMENTS DEEP IN THE WOODS, AND LOUD YOWLING. THE WHOLE PLACE WAS JUST DAMN STRANGE AT NIGHT."

Long before the 1980s, Germans stopped believing werewolves could be real, thinking more about witches and ghosts,' he says, explaining how for American soldiers, Hollywood werewolf culture and Brothers Grimm-inspired folklore was relatively new.

During the final year of the war and the initial stages of Germany's occupation by allied forces, Nazi 'werewolf' troops - plain clothes soldiers using guerrilla warfare tactics - attacked by surprise, at night, often from concealed positions like forests. Operation Werewolf failed to cause significant disruption to allied plans, but with Hitler's 'Fight to the Death' speech still in their enemies' minds, the werewolf forces managed to create a climate of fear that fed superstition for years to come.

So what could have happened that night? A shrine (there are hundreds dotted all around the Hunsrück region to ward off ill-fortune) just outside Morbach in the village of

Rapperath is the most likely setting for the adventure. Built in 1600, a few years before the Wittlich Werewolf supposedly roamed the forests, the shrine was set up after an outbreak of disease amongst livestock almost brought the farming community to its knees. Religious traditions are still strong in the area and every year villagers take part in a ceremonial march to the shrine, holding candles, to ensure protection from any new misfortune.

What if an impressionable American security policeman had seen the procession and was told by a mischievous local that it was all about protecting the village from the local werewolf? What if after seeing the candle unlit, bored and full of superstition,

an overactive imagination later conjured up the creature he had been warned about? Matthias Burgard believed that was the case.

He adds: 'Today, Americans travel hundreds of kilometres just to see some windmills. But their biggest danger is falling ice spears and a sign warns people to look out for that.'

However, when I visited the site where the perimeter fence of the old base cuts through the dense thicket of conifers, I couldn't pretend to be sure he is right - sure enough to venture alone into the same forest in which that wolf-like intruder was allegedly encountered. How could I be certain that behind the next tree, something terrifying wouldn't be lurking? •



Crispin Andrews is a freelance writer and journalist. He has always been interested in the supernatural and mysteries, particularly the weird and wonderful. He writes for a wide range of magazines, such as *Britain Teachers*, *Wisden Cricketer* and *Pet People*.

FURTHER READING:

Prof Ashlimann's quotes can be read at: www.pitt.edu/~dash/werewolf.htm. The almen's quotes can be viewed at: www.buzzle.com/comments/30902-1.htm.

See also: *Half Human, Half Animal: Tales of Werewolves and Related Creatures* by Jamie Hall, 1stBooks Library, 2003; *Hunting the American Werewolf: Beast Men in Wisconsin and Beyond* by Linda Hodfrey, published by Big Earth, 2006; *Das Monster Von Morbach* by Matthias Burgard, published by Waxmann, 2008.



MATTHIAS BURGARD local researcher into the werewolf legend, Matthias Burgard, standing at the Morbach shrine in the Hunsrück. He has written several documentaries on the topic and believes that sightings were made up to scare new recruits. © Crispin Andrews

THE RETURN OF THE WEREWOLF

Like the vampire, much of what we think we know about the werewolf comes from Hollywood. Following the release of a major new werewolf film, **BRAD STEIGER** takes another look at movie-lore's place in werewolf tradition.

On February 12, *The Wolfman*, starring Benicio Del Toro as Lawrence Talbot and Anthony Hopkins as Sir John Talbot was released after a nearly two-year wait on the studio shelves.

For millions of contemporary men and women, the word 'werewolf' conjures up images of the actor Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Wolf Man* (1941), creeping through the nocturnal mists, a good man tortured by the knowledge that the bite of a werewolf has caused him to endure a monthly metamorphosis into a monster during the full moon.

Although a wolf, we still recognize Chaney as a man, fully clothed, walking upright in a peculiar loping movement.

In later motion pictures, such as *The Howling* and *An American Werewolf in London* (both 1981), vastly improved visual effects allow us to witness the complete transformation of man into wolf, but *The Wolf Man* created a number of werewolf traditions that became cinematic werewolf dogma in many horror films to follow.



WOLF MAN 1941: Lon Chaney Jr. takes the title role in *The Wolf Man*, one of a series of classic monster movies from Universal Pictures. This highly successful movie is behind much of what we might call modern werewolf-lore.

- People become werewolves after being bitten or scratched by a werewolf.
- Upon the rising of the first full moon after surviving the attack by the werewolf, the victims are themselves transformed into werewolves. Such shall be their fate forever.
- The process of transformation causes fangs and claws to grow, hair to sprout all over the body, and human compassion to be clouded by blood lust.
- Werewolves retain an upright, two-legged human body shape and continue to wear the clothing in which they were attired before the transformation began. The werewolf of ancient tradition usually runs on all fours and has discarded all vestiges of clothing before the process of transmutation begins.
- Wolfsbane is effective at keeping a werewolf at bay. Garlic is also a good werewolf deterrent, and a pentagram (the five-pointed star) might save your life if it is made of silver.
- An object made of silver is the only thing that can kill a werewolf. (A silver bullet in the heart would be added in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, 1943.)

With these cinematic rules firmly established in *The Wolf Man*, Universal Pictures rewrote centuries of werewolf lore and legend. Even the famous folk wisdom 'Even the man who is pure at heart/And says his prayers at night/May become a wolf when the wolf-bane blooms/And the moon is clear and bright', was composed by the screenwriter for the film.

The true origin of the werewolf tradition began more than 140,000 years ago when wolves and humans formed a common bond for hunting. The wolf's strength, stamina and keener senses of smell and hearing helped humans to hunt prey and overcome predators.

The human species greatly depended upon wolves for its



WOLF MAN 2010: Benicio Del Toro adopts the hairy make-up in Universal Pictures' just released 're-imagining' of *The Wolf Man*, directed by Joe Johnston.

continued existence and modeled much of their behavior, especially in the area of survival skills, upon the wolf. Certain elements of lupine savagery may well have been 'inherited' along with the more noble aspects of a sense of community and mutual support.

Now most of us have become 'domesticated' and listen to the inner voice of conscience cultivated over centuries of civilized behavior, but there are always a few individuals who succumb to the more vicious seed of the wolf within them.

When one compares the details of the offences charged to alleged werewolves during the witchcraft mania of the Middle Ages with the offences attributed to savage sex criminals like the Chicago Rippers and Jeffrey Dahmer, it becomes clear that there exists a werewolf psychosis that can cause people to commit vicious crimes as if they were wolves scratching, biting, and killing their prey.

Yet the werewolf as a creature of superstition poses a psychic threat, as well as a physical one, for the werewolf of tradition is the deliberate creation of a human, usually a magician, who, motivated by a desire for power or revenge, has sought to release the beast within and accomplish the transformation of human into wolf.

Since prehistoric times the bloodline of the wolf has blended with that of our own species, and each one of us bears the personal responsibility of honouring the noble aspects of our lupine heritage and, at the same time, keeping the savage bloodlust under control. ●

Brad Steiger is the author of *The Werewolf Book: An Encyclopedia of Shape-Shifting Beings*, published by Gale.

THE GREAT SILENCE

Millions of worlds in our galaxy could conceivably support intelligent life but if so the ETs out there are remaining extraordinarily quiet: projects like SETI have yet to find any evidence for them. **NIGEL WOOLSEY** re-examines all the angles of the classic ufological question: 'Where is everybody?'



STILL LISTENING: One of the many radio telescopes at the vast array near Socorro, New Mexico, used by the SETI Project to search for evidence of intelligent extraterrestrial life.

WHILE LUNCHING with his colleagues at the Los Alamos Laboratory in 1950 the Italian-born physicist Enrico Fermi asked a question, the answer to which is still a source of mystery, puzzlement and debate to astronomers around the world nearly 60 years later. The question Fermi posed was: 'Where is everybody?'

Enrico Fermi can be fairly described as one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century. Born in Rome in 1901, from an early age he showed a great aptitude for both mathematics and physics. Awarded the Nobel Prize in 1938, he moved to the United States just before the outbreak of World War 2, successfully producing the world's first nuclear chain reaction in 1942. Fermi was subsequently involved in the famous Manhattan project to construct the first atomic bomb. In particular, he was notable for his ability to apply simple mathematics to apparently complex problems to produce workable estimates.

The story goes that a newspaper cartoon regarding the mysterious disappearance of several trash cans in New York, illustrated by little alien creatures abducting the rubbish bins, had sparked a discussion between Fermi and his colleagues regarding the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere. As lunch progressed the conversation turned to other topics when suddenly Fermi asked: 'Where is everybody?'

His colleagues realised the physicist had been mulling over the question of extraterrestrial life while they had been chatting and had come to the nub of the problem concerning other intelligent life in the galaxy: that we currently see no evidence it exists.

In its simplest form, Fermi's paradox can be described thus:



given the age of the Universe and our galaxy, taking into account how long it took intelligent life to evolve on this planet and then making a reasonable guess at how long it would take for a technological civilisation to travel between stars, the conclusion is that more than enough time has gone by for at least one civilisation to have colonised the Milky Way by now. Not only should we have seen some evidence of this but, more crucially, we should have been visited by such intelligences many times already.

Since there is no current evidence this is the case, this leaves us with Fermi's original puzzling question: where is everybody?

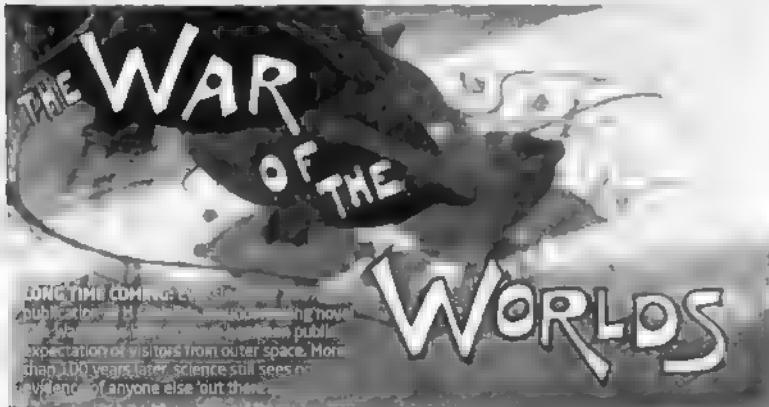
Given that there may be as many as 400 billion stars in our galaxy and assuming that a significant

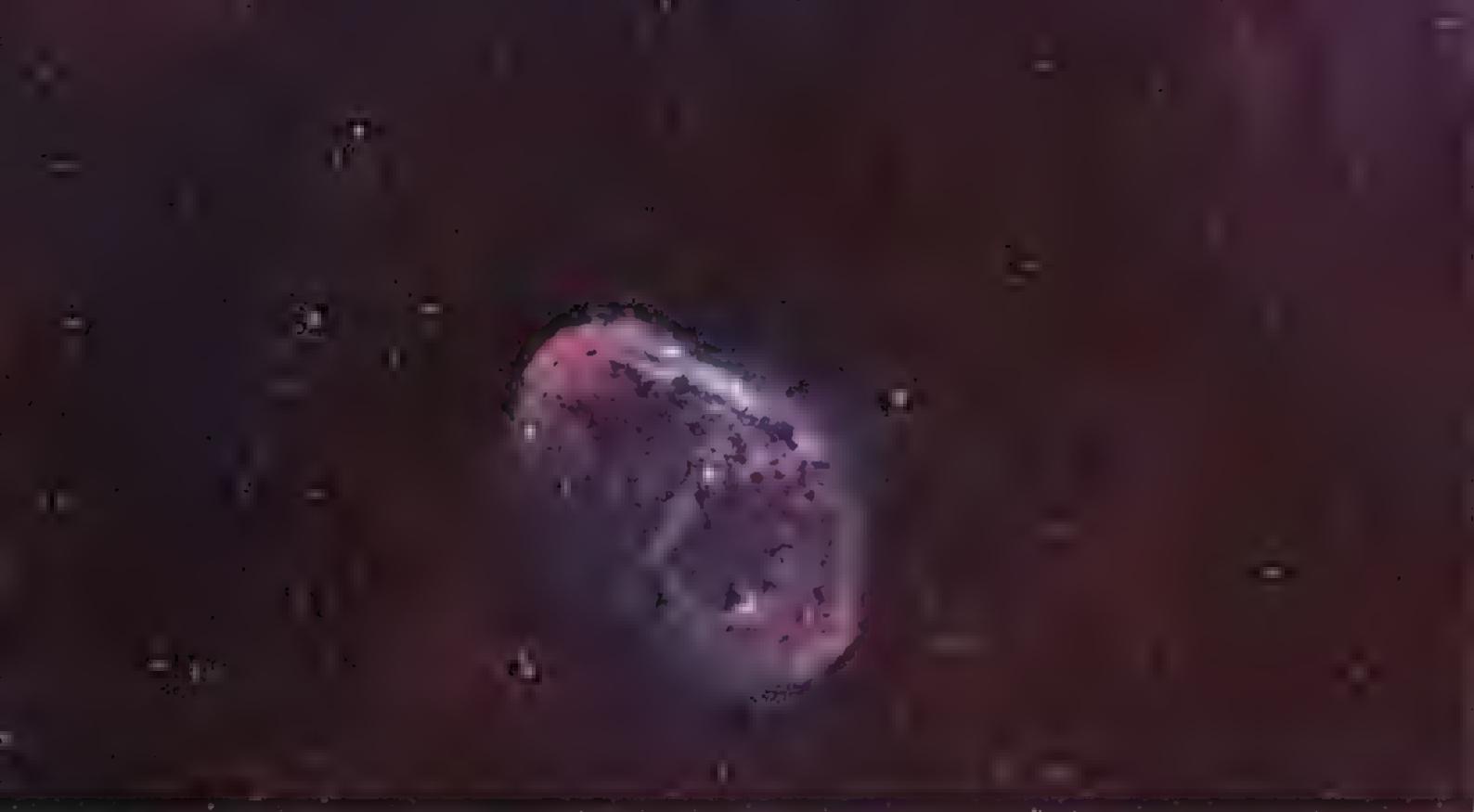
'THE PHYSICIST HAD COME TO THE NUB OF THE PROBLEM CONCERNING OTHER INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE GALAXY: THAT WE CURRENTLY SEE NO EVIDENCE IT EXISTS.'

proportion of these stars have planetary companions, the chances of intelligent life evolving elsewhere – even if intelligent life is a rare occurrence – seem quite good. Obviously, not all stars or planets are suitable for the kind of life we see here on Earth but if only a relatively small fraction are suitable, they could number in the hundreds of millions.

Many of the arguments supporting the idea of extraterrestrial life are dependent on the 'principle of mediocrity'. This assumes that there is nothing unique about Earth – it is a normal rocky planet orbiting at just the right distance from a very ordinary star in an unremarkable arm of an otherwise typical galaxy.

Opposing this view is the 'Rare Earth principle' which maintains that although simple life may be common, we are the product of a series of unique circumstances making intelligence very rare. This means that we are either alone or civilisations are spread only very ●





HARSH ENVIRONMENTS

Certain conditions are required for supporting life as we know it and many regions of space are highly unsuitable due to the presence of extreme concentrations of radiation or explosive bodies like supernovas. Pictured here is the NGC 6888 'Crescent' Nebula showing supernova explosion remnants among stars in the background.

thinly throughout the galaxy. In addition to this is the possibility that we may be the first intelligent species to arise in the Milky Way.

It must be acknowledged that the galaxy is not a benign and unchanging environment – cataclysmic events take place in the form of lethal supernova explosions, caused when stars more massive than the sun exhaust their hydrogen supplies at the end of their lives. These events spell certain doom for any planets orbiting stars which end their lives in this manner but, more importantly, they are capable of searing great swathes of nearby space with radiation that would almost certainly sterilise any planets within several light-years.

It is possible that our galaxy, like the stars within it, has 'habitable zones' where conditions are more favourable to the long-term development of life. The densely packed centre of our galaxy is a place wracked with gravitational forces together with lethal levels of radiation due to the vast number of stars in close proximity to one another. It is therefore possible that conditions are more amenable to the development of life out in the spiral arms, where our own star orbits the galactic plane.

Even so, with so many stars and so much time, why do we not see firm evidence of the existence of intelligent alien life?

One possible answer is that we aren't looking in the right places or that our assumptions are somehow wrong. For example, when Frank

'NOT ALL STARS OR PLANETS ARE SUITABLE FOR THE KIND OF LIFE WE SEE HERE ON EARTH BUT IF ONLY A SMALL FRACTION ARE SUITABLE, THEY COULD NUMBER IN THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS.'

Drake began the first search for ET signals in 1960, he had to consider which, out of the millions of possible radio frequencies available, another civilisation might be broadcasting on. He chose the frequency of 1.42 GHz – judging that this was an ideal starting point for two reasons: Firstly, this is the frequency of radiation emitted naturally by interstellar hydrogen, a fact that would be known by a technological alien civilisation elsewhere. Secondly, it had the additional benefit of being a relatively quiet portion of the radio spectrum and so would make a signal easier to hear against the cosmic background noise.

Modern researchers use equipment capable of scanning millions of frequencies simultaneously in their search for ET but, despite a few intriguing possibilities, we have yet to find and verify a definitive radio signal from an alien civilisation.

Maybe the answer lies in the fact ET isn't using radio at all. SETI researchers have already anticipated that ET may instead be using lasers to catch our attention. Consequently, various optical searches are currently under way

looking for extremely brief laser pulses out in space. Taking this reasoning further, it might be that ET is using other methods, such as microwave or infrared beacons, to signal across the gulfs of space. Perhaps they might be using much more exotic methods, such as neutrinos, gravity waves or some other technology that we have yet to discover.

However, weighed against this is the assumption that a civilisation wanting to be found would make it as easy as possible for their signals to be detected. That brings us to the next consideration: What if other civilisations are deliberately staying silent?

Perhaps they are content to sit at home on their planet and have no interest in even listening to the radio chatter from the stars. Or could this signal a far more ominous reason for staying silent – what if the other ET civilisations have discovered it's dangerous to reveal yourself? Similar thinking in the past has led to calls against our making deliberate broadcasts into space for fear of who or what we might alert to our presence.

Others have suggested more altruistic motives behind the

great silence. The 'zoo hypothesis' seeks to explain our current lack of contact by suggesting that the aliens have decided we are, at present, still a somewhat backward and primitive society and our solar system has been classed as a protected nature reserve of sorts by the galactic community. It would be assumed that contact would then be established upon our developing past some pre-determined technological or sociological point.

However, it is difficult to see how all galactic civilisations would be made to comply with this embargo and it does not explain why no traces of intelligent activity have been observed by astronomers or why no signals have been detected. Could it be that our observations of the rest of universe are being altered to make it appear as if there are no other civilisations; has a vast planetarium or other simulation been put in place to mask the true reality?

Perhaps the most amusing

'WHAT IF ET CIVILISATIONS HAVE DISCOVERED IT'S DANGEROUS TO REVEAL YOURSELF? SIMILAR THINKING HAS LED TO CALLS AGAINST OUR MAKING BROADCASTS INTO SPACE FOR FEAR OF WHO OR WHAT WE MIGHT ALERT TO OUR PRESENCE.'

solution to Fermi's question was offered almost immediately by one of his lunch companions, Leo Szilard, who quipped: 'They are among us and they call themselves Hungarians.' This was based upon an in-joke at Los Alamos regarding the fact that the brilliant scientists Eugene Wigner, Edward Teller, John von Neumann and Szilard himself had all been born in Hungary.

Solutions to the Fermi paradox are as broad and varied as the human imagination. In the final analysis, however, there are only two possible answers: that we are at present alone or other civilisations exist and we will one day establish contact with them.

Both answers present us with profound revelations upon our place in the Universe but whatever the final solution is to Fermi's paradox, we must acknowledge that it may be some time before this question is finally answered.

In the meantime, we may be wise to take the advice of the legendary proponent of extraterrestrial life, Carl Sagan, who reminded us that 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence'. ●

Sources, Further reading & useful links:

Are we alone in the cosmos? (2000) - Edited by Ben Bova

Where's everybody? 50 solutions to the Fermi Paradox (2002) - Stephen Webb

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi_paradox

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drake_equation

REMAINING HIDDEN:
The classic sci-fi movie *The Day The Earth Stood Still* released in 1951, just a year after Fermi uttered his paradox, popularised the idea of a galactic police force keeping a sharp eye on the evolution of warlike mankind. Michael Rennie, as Klaatu, arrived with 'A Warning and an Ultimatum' but could advance alien civilisations's only be keeping us in the dark about their presence until they feel we're ready to be welcomed into the fold?

FROM OUT OF SPACE — A WARNING AND AN ULTIMATUM

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

MICHAEL RENNIE | PATRICIA NEAL | JUGI MARLOWE

DOUG BLAUSTEIN | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Shivers in The Shambles

Although other cities now make similar claims, York was the first to sell itself as Britain's most haunted city. At York's historic heart is the area of winding lanes and medieval buildings known as The Shambles. Together with other members of the G.H.O.S.T. investigation team, **DARREN RITSON** spent an eerie winter's night in two of these ancient buildings, and in creepy cellars extending beneath the cobbled streets. Here is his report.

ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 4, 2009, the Ghosts and Hauntings Overnight Surveillance Team arrived in the haunted city of York to conduct a double investigation. Two buildings forming the city's famous medieval quarter, The Shambles, were our focus of operation.

At 9pm we were met by Simon Cox who took us down to numbers 22 and 44, which he now runs as gift shops. Number 44 is around 400 years old and has three floors. On each floor there is a passage leading to two rooms, one at the front of The Shambles, and one looking over the market square at the rear. The rooms on the upper level are used for storage, those downstairs being used for the shop, with a small tea-room and café at the rear. The building also features an ancient wooden stairwell connecting all these old rooms and landings together.

Number 22 is quite different. It is a much smaller shop but had a hidden gem, or rather two: a pair of trapdoors under the shop floor. One led down into an old, foreboding cellar which required the use of ladders to access.

Trapdoor two was the *piece de resistance*: after negotiating your way down some old stone steps, you are led into another cellar which in turn leads you under the cobbled road through The Shambles to an area beneath a neighbouring church.

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS
Before we set about conducting the usual baseline tests prior to our investigation, I decided to speak to the people who work in the shop. Team member Fiona Vipond had already gleaned some information regarding the ghosts from Simon on her pre-investigation visit; indeed it was thanks to Fiona that we were here in the first place. But, for my notes and for my personal files, I needed to interview those people who had had first-hand experiences with the alleged ghosts.



I first spoke to Simon Cox. He told me his sister-in-law Chantelle had heard something rather strange when alone in the shop and that the ghost of a woman dressed in black had been seen on the stairs of the property by his wife. He had no idea of the possibly identities of these ghostly visitors.

The 'woman in black' had been seen only eight weeks prior to ●

LOCATION ONE: The shop front of Number 44 The Shambles. The apparition of a woman in black and an eerie growling sound are included in the paranormal activity recorded here. © GHOST

'HE TOLD ME THE GHOST OF A WOMAN DRESSED IN BLACK HAD BEEN SEEN ON THE STAIRS [AND] HE HAD HEARD A GROWLING NOISE ON THREE OCCASIONS WHEN NO ONE WAS AROUND.'



MEET THE TEAM:
From left, Paul
Dixon, Ralph
Keeler, Drew
Bartley, Fiona
Vipond, Mark
Winter and Darren
Ritson.



LOCATION TWO: A night shot of the rear of Number 22 and the gift shop in the interior of the building. The shop has seen a considerable amount of poltergeist activity, with the stands propelled around, sending items flying off them onto the floor © GHOST



THE STANDS HAVE BEEN SEEN TO SPIN AROUND, SENDING ALL THE MERCHANDISE FLYING, AND BELLS HAVE BEEN HEARD RINGING INSIDE THE SHOP.

our visit, so it seemed the activity was ongoing. I asked Simon if anything had occurred since Fiona's first visit to the shop. He said a number of things had indeed taken place there. For example, he had heard a growling noise on three occasions when no one was around, and 'strange stenches' would suddenly emanate from no apparent source and then stop just as abruptly as they had come. As recently as the night before our investigation a door opened for no apparent reason. In total, six different individuals lay claim to experiencing paranormal phenomena at the premises.

In regards to the ghostly activity in his other shop,

Number 22, Simon told me that things fly off the stands and shelves (key rings, novelty signs etc). He also said the stands have been seen to spin around, sending all the merchandise flying, and bells have been heard ringing inside the shop. Of course, this shop is only yards away from the church, but Simon assured me the sounds were of little hand bells, the sort that people use on their reception desks when

found. Some months previously a visitor informed Chantelle that she had seen an apparition of a man 'like a head teacher' standing in the corner of the room. He had a young boy on his shoulder and was dressed in old-fashioned clothes. Within the blink of an eye, they had vanished.

York, of course, is famous for its ghostly inhabitants. Within the walls of this ancient city there are said to be 140 of them. Well, we now knew there were potentially at least another six to add to the list.

OUR MEDIUM'S TESTIMONY

Prior to the investigation, I also had a quiet chat with Ralph Keeton, the team medium, in an upstairs room. Ralph said that soon after he arrived at number 44 – a couple of hours before the rest of us – he was met by a 'spirit woman'.

He said: 'When I saw this woman, I had the feeling she was blind in one eye. It was as though I felt a cloudy sensation across the left-hand side of my face and eye. Perhaps she had had a stroke. Of course when I mentioned this, I was astonished to find out the ghost of a woman has been seen on the property.'

'I then ended up doing an impromptu reading for Simon's friend, Barry. As I was trying to tune in to the building, a dog then

people need to 'ring for attention'.

Simon's sister-in-law, Chantelle Morris works in the café in shop 44. She told me that she too had heard a 'growl' similar to the one described by Simon. She had heard it at the bottom of the stairs and it was so clear that she hunted round, trying to find whoever was playing a joke on her – but she found she was alone.

On another occasion, Chantelle's sister told her she had seen a 'weird' man walk along the passageway and enter the café. When they both went to see who it was, they found the room empty but the door to the storage room (which leads nowhere) wide open. No one was

HISTORIC: The Shambles area is situated in the heart of the ancient city of York, not far from the glorious York Minster



came through. It was a brown Boxer dog that had a bad paw. It would always hobble around on three legs and was very ill indeed. When I mentioned this, Barry nearly fell over: you see, the dog was Barry's and it died not so long ago.

'Also, when we were down here earlier on we all heard footsteps and thumps coming from the rooms above... well nobody was up there at the time and the buildings either side of this property are empty, so what could it have been? I also get the feelings of aches and pains, and sores around the mouth.'

At this point from the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of something moving. It was on the landing and moved very quickly. I said nothing but just as I was about to look towards the stairs to see what it was Ralph said: 'There you go again, there is more movement over there.'

He pointed directly to the door where I had just caught some movement from the corner of my eye. It turns out we both saw something and I was quite surprised to say the least.

WAS IT FOLLOWING US?
It was time to carry out the baseline tests. I now knew all I needed to choose sites for our motion sensors and trigger objects.

During the course of these tests, while making our way down the stairs to the lower section of the building, a most unusual thing occurred. Investigator Drew Bartley's

EMF meter began to show a high reading in an area where it shouldn't have. It was nowhere near the ceiling, nor was it near any walls, so hidden wires could be ruled out. The odd reading lasted for about two minutes before we ventured further down the stairs. At this point the reading was still quite high.

Now came the really odd thing. As we progressed down the stairs about five steps, the high reading persisted. But when we tested where the reading had been moments earlier, about five steps up, it was now gone. The high EMF reading had

come down the stairs with us! It happened again. Down a few stairs we went and where we had previously had the high reading, nothing. The high reading was now in the spot where Drew was taking the new readings.

It seems that there was an anomaly within the natural electromagnetic field, one which had seemed to follow us down the stairs. Now I am not saying that this odd reading was a ghost or spirit that was being detected. We don't know that for sure. What I am saying is there was very strange readings within the electromagnetic field where there shouldn't have been. It also just happened to be in the very area where the ghost of a woman has been seen.

We finished the baseline readings on the ground floor and apart from the aforementioned oddity, all went well. We were now ready to begin our overnight surveillance.

OUR VIGIL BEGINS

Drew, Fiona and Simon Cox staked out the cellars in Shop 22 first, while the rest of the group focused on Number 44. I stayed downstairs with Mark Winter and investigation guest Barry Mason, while Ralph Keeton and Paul Dixon investigated the topmost floor. ●

FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING MOVING. IT WAS ON THE LANDING AND MOVED VERY QUICKLY.'





Drew Bartley takes EMF sweeps on the haunted stairwell in Number 44. Inexplicably high readings seemed to follow the investigators as they moved down the stairs. © G.H.O.S.T.

I began the vigil by taking some new temperature and EMF readings and it was pretty much the same as earlier on. I called out to the atmosphere to see if we could gain any responses from any of the alleged spirits or ghosts that are thought to reside there, but to no avail. Mark set up his video camera at the foot of the stairwell looking up.

One thing during this vigil did occur, however, which is worth noting. At around midnight, when I was walking through the door to return back into the main café area, I felt a succession of short, sharp tugs upon my lower trouser leg. It was a definite 'pull'

I FELT A SUCCESSION OF SHORT, SHARP TUGS ON MY TROUSER LEG. IT WAS A DEFINITE "PULL" AS THOUGH SOMEONE ACTUALLY GRABBED MY CLOTHING.'

as though someone actually grabbed my clothing.

Ralph and Paul had a little success in their vigil on the top floor. A few laps and bumps were heard throughout the vigil and one or two strange light anomalies were filmed on video camera. Ralph had a little more to say in regards to his psychic impressions. He came down stairs and told us that he thought there was an old alleyway that once led from the front of the shop to the rear of the building. He suggested the alley may have been in the space now taken up by the store cupboard in the café area. This may make sense because Chantelle and her sister said a man ventured into this area and seemed to disappear just about where Ralph thinks the alley once was. Perhaps it was the shade of a man strolling around in his day, and decided to venture up the alleyway that,

of course, isn't there anymore.

Drew and Fiona had an interesting time in their vigil, too, with some very odd K2 EMF readings in the cellar and tunnels. I grabbed Fiona during our first break and this is what she told me.

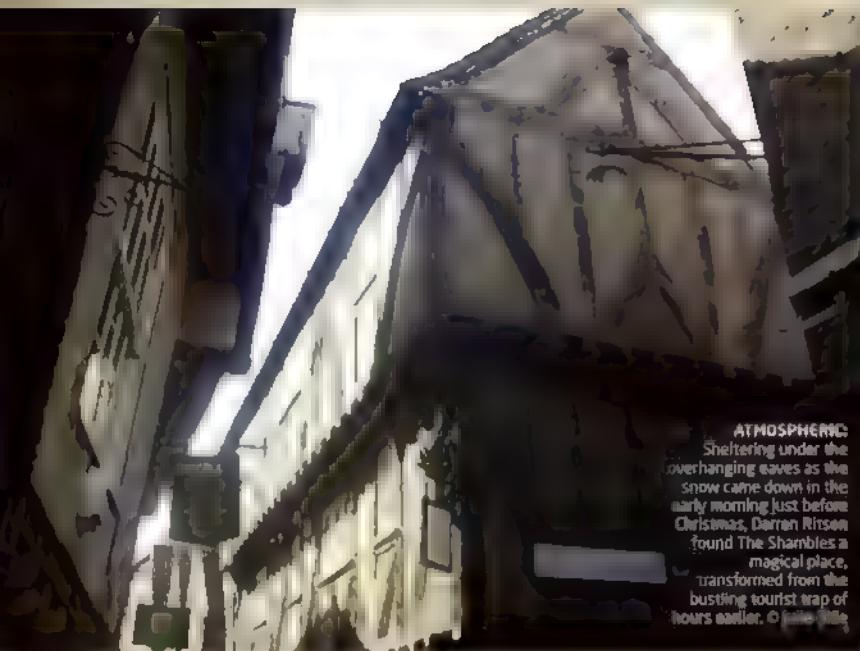
'In the second cellar, the larger of the two, something touched me on the hip, full on. There was no one next to me at the time so I know it wasn't any of the group. About ten minutes into the vigil my camera started to play up, just like they were doing when we were all in here earlier on. So that was quite interesting. At around 11.50pm Drew's EMF machine went off of its own accord so perhaps something or some sort of energy manifested itself there at that time? We swept that area again soon after and we got a reading of zero.'

'Just before the end of the vigil



I began to feel really unwell for some reason. Perhaps I was disorientated down there, I don't know. Our K2 EMF went berserk too. We got some rather interesting results after calling out down there. It was spiking quite a lot and giving a high reading. Every time we asked a question it went off, but every time we stayed quiet, it stayed quiet. One final thing: just as we were leaving the cellar at the end of the vigil Simon heard a horrible guttural breath.'

'So, not a bad start.'



ATMOSPHERIC
Sheltering under the overhanging eaves as the snow came down in the early morning just before Christmas, Darren Rinson found The Shambles a magical place, transformed from the bustling tourist trap of hours earlier. One of the

HARROWING SOUNDS

After the break at 1.30am Ralph, Paul and Barry paid the cellars a visit in Shop 22, while Mark Winter and I investigated the top floor. Drew, Fiona and Simon staked out the café area. In these vigils not a thing was documented or experienced during the course of the vigil, but that often happens when you are ghost hunting. Mark and I did hear one loud tap during our vigil but put it down to natural causes: a floorboard contracting or the wood beams in the ceiling settling down. EVP experiments were carried out with no results worth noting.

When Ralph and Paul returned from the cellars in 22 Ralph told me: 'We had a little bit of activity. The first cellar was rather quiet so after a while we moved into the second cellar. When we took out the K2 EMF and swept the area, three lights came on, two green and one orange. Now wherever we swept with the K2 the energy remained. Like with you guys on the stairs earlier on, when we took a reading where we had just taken the reading earlier on, it was now gone. It was as though the electromagnetic field anomaly was following us around: it was so strange.'

'I established the fact there was a young girl in there and for some reason she was frightened. Then I became aware of the guy in there and his presence was

'THICK WHITE SNOWFLAKES HAD BEGUN TO FALL AND I COULD SEE THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FLASHING DOWN THE COBBLED LANE. FOR A MOMENT, STANDING UNDER THE TWO CROOKED OLD BUILDINGS, I WAS TRANSPORTED BACK TO DICKENSIAN ENGLAND.'

rather dominant. Every time we had contact with these spirits the lights on the K2 were on but when I said "I think we are going now" to Paul and Barry, the lights on the K2 went off and stayed off. It was as though the spirits there faded away as they knew we were off. Weird.'

At 2.30am I ventured outside alone to smoke a cigarette and by now thick white snowflakes had begun to fall. The Shambles was completely deserted, which is something you don't get to see that often, and I was mesmerised by the scene. I could see the Christmas lights flashing down the cobbled lane and for a moment, standing under the two crooked old buildings that almost touch in the centre of The Shambles, I was transported back to Dickensian England. Moments like this are among the reasons I love ghost hunting.

After leaving the underground tunnels in shop 22 earlier on in the night (after taking a pre-investigation peek in there) Mark left his EVP machine recording. Ninety minutes were recorded in all, of which the final hour is the most interesting as we

know for a fact the premises was completely empty. Five minutes or so after we all left the tunnels you can hear footfalls, and lots of them - some close to the machine, indicating they are inside the cellar area, and some far away, suggesting that perhaps someone was walking overhead along on the road above. Presumably, some of these footsteps have a natural cause, but we feel it's just as likely some of them are truly anomalous. They are just too close to the recording device. At 36 minutes and 57 seconds you can hear another eight footsteps very close to the microphone and at 53 minutes and 09 seconds another three.

Nine minutes later, you can hear a voice saying 'Hello' and another 12 minutes a gruff voice



Darren W Ritson is a ghost hunter based in North Tyneside and has written seven books on the subject. His books include Ghost Hunter, In Search of Ghosts, Haunted Newcastle, Paranormal North, East and Supernatural North. With Mike Hollowell, he has penned Ghost Taverns and The South Shields Poltergeist. He founded the North East Ghost Research Team in May 2003, co-founded WraithScape - Paranormal with a Passion in 2007 and currently works with the Ghosts and Hauntings Overnight Surveillance Team. They can be found on line at www.ghost-team.net/ www.mikehollowell.com/wraithscape

Ghostly Gallery

JANET BORD selects a dozen of the most convincing phantoms from the files of the Fortean Picture Library. These images have never been shown in any other magazine. The following images of the ghostly figures are from the Fortean Picture Library.

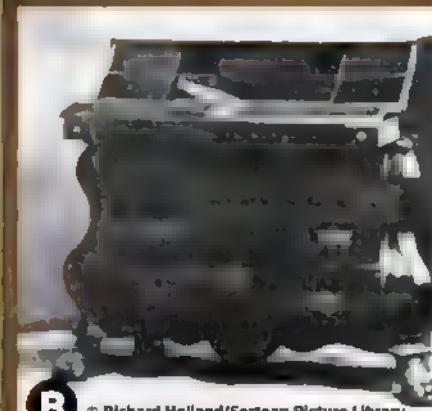
APPARITION

AT ALICE SPRINGS

Little is known about the circumstances in which **Photograph A** was taken, other than that the photographer was a clergyman by the name of the Reverend R. S. Blance. It was taken in 1959 at Corroboree Rock, Alice Springs, in Australia's Northern Territory. This place was once of great significance to the Aborigines as a cult site and initiation rites may have been performed here. It is now a 'conservation reserve' visited by tourists and hikers.

Not much detail of the ghostly figure can be made out, but what you can see doesn't look much like an Native Australian, so perhaps the ghost is of an early 20th century tourist who strayed off the track and was never seen again (except as a ghost).

HE FELT THAT THE "THING" WANTED HIM TO CAPTURE IT ON FILM, AS SOMETIMES HIS CAMERA WOULD FIRE BY ITSELF.



B

© Richard Holland/Forrester Picture Library

A



A HAUNTING HAND

Photograph B was taken for a furniture dealer, probably at the very end of the 19th century or very early in the 20th century, since it was published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1903. The photographer saw nothing strange at the time.

Photographic glass plates were used in those days, and an exposure time of 13 minutes was required, but no one went near the bureau being photographed while this was taking place. After he found a disembodied hand on his photograph, the photographer was at a loss to explain how it had come to be there. A similar photograph of the bureau with the lid closed did not include a ghostly hand.

GRAVEYARD GHOSTS.

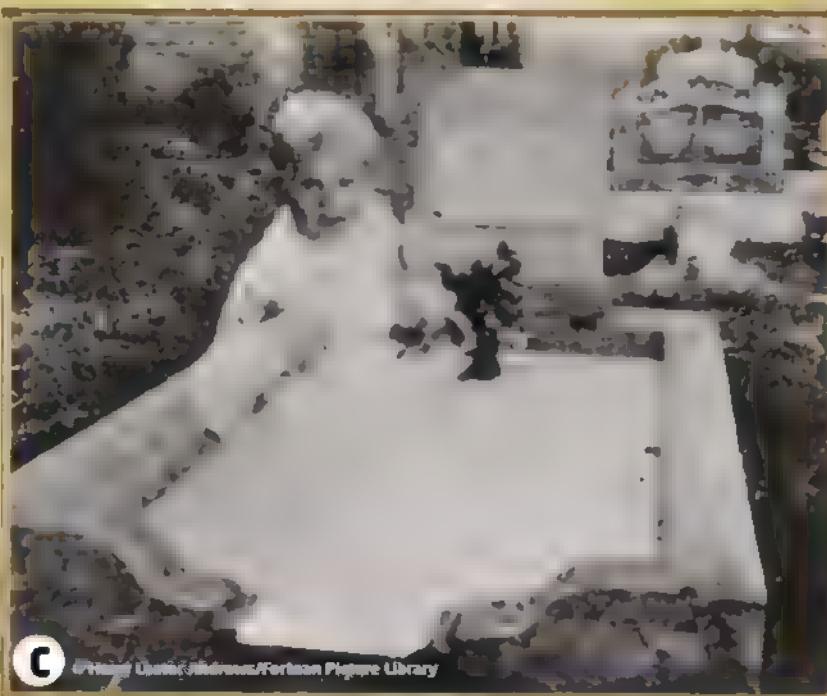
And while we're hanging around in cemeteries...

Photograph C was taken in an Australian churchyard. A ghostly child can clearly be seen but no one knows who it is, or can explain how it came to be on the photograph.

Mrs Andrews went to the churchyard at Gatton in Queensland, some time in 1946 or 1947 intending to photograph the headstone on her daughter's grave (Joyce, died, aged 17, in 1945). Joyce's brother Cecil, who died in 1942, is also buried in the grave. Later, Mrs Andrews found that her photograph also included a young child, but she was sure it was neither Joyce nor Cecil. She also said she had not photographed any living children around that time, so if a double exposure is responsible for the 'ghost', none of the family could explain it.

When Australian paranormal investigator Tony Healy, who is related to the Andrews family, visited the graveyard in 1995, he found two graves of infant girls close by, one aged 18 months, the other 3 years. Could one of those be the ghostly intruder?

In 1928 Mrs Hilda L. Wickstead was on holiday with friends in Worcestershire, and on seeing the church in the village of Holly Bush near Malvern, they decided to stop for a while. Mrs Wickstead decided to take a photograph of her friend, Mrs Laurie, and asked her to stand still while she did so. Mrs Laurie can be seen standing to the left of



C

© Valerie Lumsden Andrews/Fordean Picture Library

HE FOUND TWO GRAVES OF INFANT GIRLS CLOSE BY. COULD ONE OF THOSE BE THE GHOSTLY INTRUDER?

the tall cross by the church porch.

After taking the photograph (Photograph D), Mrs Wickstead put her camera in the car and then went to join Mrs Laurie. As she commented later, 'There was absolutely no one else in the churchyard at the time and she walked down the path to me. When I got inside the gate she drew my attention to the grave of a soldier who had died in service and another of a girl who had died a few months later. She said: "I wonder if they were lovers."

Six weeks later, when the film was developed, Mrs Wickstead noticed what appears to be an embracing couple among the gravestones in the trees, who would surely have been noticed by the visitors if they had been there in reality.

© Fordean Picture Library

D



E

© Fortean Picture Library



HOLY HAUNTS

Several ghostly photographs taken in churches have been reproduced in *Paranormal Magazine*. Here are two more. Photograph E was taken in Iona church in May 1928 by Donald G. Mackenzie, a chemist from Glasgow, who commented later that 'I am candidly a disbeliever in ghosts...' However, his photograph shows clearly what appears to be a disembodied face in front of the stone wall in the centre of the photograph.

Four friends were visiting the Basilica of Le Bois-Chenu, near Domremy, in France, in 1925, when Photograph F was taken. This church is dedicated to St Joan of Arc, who came from Domremy, and was built at the place where Joan heard her voices. The occasion for their visit was the presentation of the Union Flag to the church by Lady Palmer. Miss Townsend asked Lady Palmer to take her photograph, and she can be seen in the centre. The two other people present, Mr and Mrs W. E. Foster, were behind the camera. These four were the only people inside the church, and none of them saw the two figures which also appeared on the photograph.

Closer examination of the original print suggested to them that the figures were priests wearing archaic vestments. But if so, they are unlikely to have officiated in the basilica, which was only built in the late 19th century.

'THESE FOUR WERE THE ONLY PEOPLE INSIDE THE CHURCH, AND NONE OF THEM SAW THE TWO FIGURES WHICH ALSO APPEARED ON THE PHOTOGRAPH.'

PHANTOM FELINE

In June 1974 Alfred Hollidge of Leigh-on-Sea, in Essex, took a photograph of his cat Monet. The photograph - Boy - also showed a ghostly cat, which Monet seems to be looking at. The Hollidges only had one cat, and there was definitely no other cat in the house when the photograph was taken. Sadly Mr Hollidge never saw the photograph, as he died in September 1974 before the prints were viewed, and it was his wife who eventually discovered the image of the apparent ghost cat.

H

© George Kanigowski/Paragon Picture Library



'HE SAW NOTHING UNUSUAL AT THE TIME. INDEED, A PERSON WOULD HAVE NEEDED TO CLIMB ON THE WALL IN ORDER TO GET INTO THE PICTURE.'

G

SPOOKY HOLIDAY SNAP
George Kanigowski was on holiday in Cyprus in September 1986 and he decided to photograph the lights of Limassol harbour at night. His Olympus OM10 camera was mounted on a tripod on a 3-foot high wall, and a time exposure of 30 seconds was used for each of the five slides. He saw nothing unusual at the time, and no one crossed his path: indeed, a person would have needed to climb on the wall in order to get into the picture. But when he got home and had the slides processed by Kodak, George found that although four were normal, one - Photograph H - showed what may be a ghostly figure.

G

MYSTERIOUS MISTS

In 1991, when he was two years old, Greg Sheldon Maxwell started saying 'Old Nanna's here!', while pointing up into the air. He was referring to his late great-grandmother, who used to say to her daughter that she wanted her to see her when she was dead. When Photograph I was taken, nobody saw anything unusual, but Greg certainly seems to be looking at something. Was he seeing Old Nanna in what appears to us to be a column of mist?

Two years later, when Greg and his mother were in England for a few months (the family normally lived in Abu Dhabi), and visiting his grandmother, he was asked if he still saw Old Nanna. He said, 'No, but I can show you what she looks like', and took his mother and grandmother into the hall where he pointed to a photograph on the wall, and said: 'That's how she looked when I saw her.'

He had never mentioned the photograph before, and presumably hadn't been told who it was.

Bachelors Grove Cemetery in Illinois (not far from Chicago) is an abandoned burial ground with a ghostly reputation. There have been many reported sightings of ghosts, mysterious lights, eerie mists - and strange noises have been heard (watch out if you view the website www.bachelors-grove.com - it scared me half to death!).

Photographs J1 and J2 were taken in 1974 by Tony Vaci. He said that the mist could only be photographed in two areas of the cemetery, and that he had managed to take over 100 such photographs using Polaroid cameras. He felt that the 'thing' wanted him to capture it on film, as sometimes his camera would 'fire' by itself. He had witnesses with him when he photographed the



I - Greg Sheldon Maxwell/Fortean Picture Library

'GREG CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE LOOKING AT SOMETHING. WAS HE SEEING OLD NANNA IN WHAT APPEARS TO US TO BE A COLUMN OF MIST?'



K

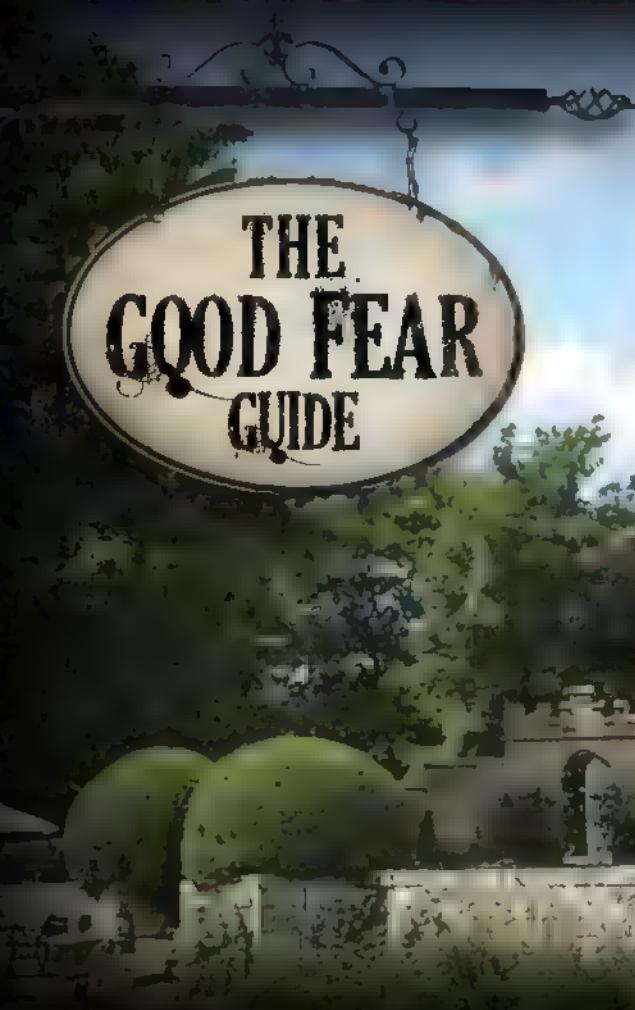


J1



J2

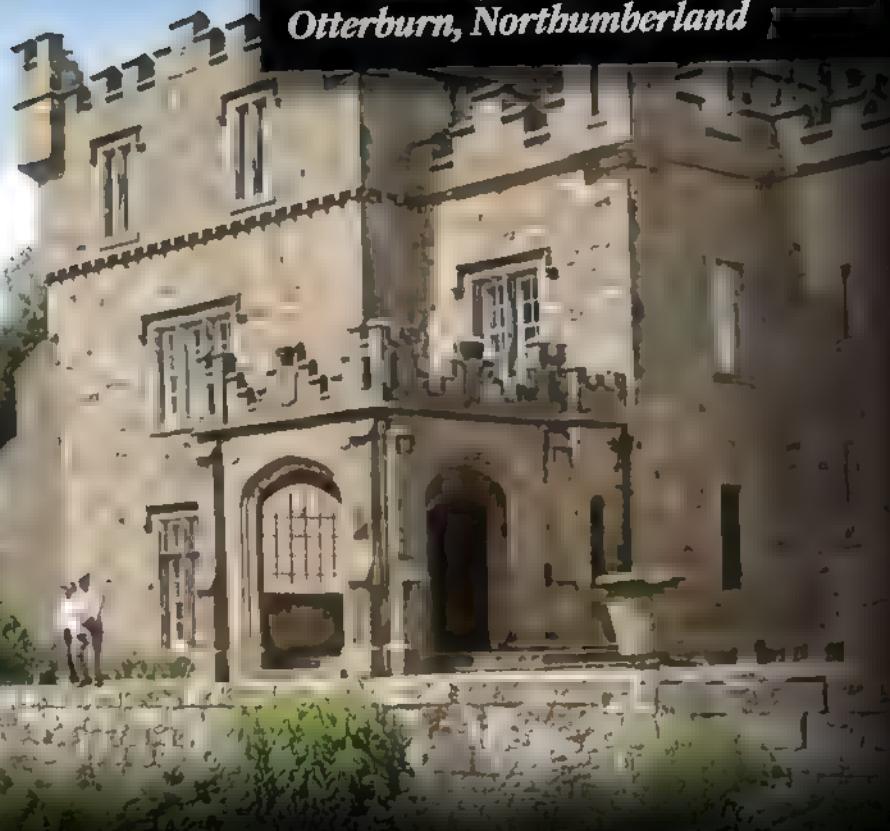
mists, and when the camera fired by itself, including the well-known local ghost hunter Richard Crowe. Photograph K was taken by Matt Adams in an English cemetery in 1994, and it shows what looks like a misty face rising from an open grave.



THE GOOD FEAR GUIDE

OTTERBURN TOWER HOTEL

Otterburn, Northumberland



Northumberland is justly celebrated for its wild, beautiful countryside, miles of empty beaches and rich heritage.

A haven of peace today, this north-eastern county has seen much turmoil in times gone by: Hadrian's Wall is perhaps the oldest testament to its historical position as a disputed borderland. Numerous castles were built along this wild frontier in the Middle Ages and they were at the centre of almost constant conflict. Much tragedy attaches to these old fortresses so it should be no surprise if they should turn out to be haunted.

One of the most magnificent and best preserved of these haunted castles is Otterburn Tower in the Redesdale valley. Now an atmospheric and comfortable hotel, the original building dates back to the 11th century. It was founded by a cousin of William the Conqueror.

The Otterburn Tower Country House Hotel nestles in 32 acres of its own estate, fronted by terraced lawns and surrounded by woodland. It has been lovingly restored, retaining many of its original features such as oak panelling, leaded panes and stained

glass. Its 17 individually decorated and well-appointed rooms are all en-suite and the hotel also boasts an award-winning restaurant which has a strong emphasis on fresh food sourced from the local farms and its own vegetable garden - even the water comes from a nearby spring.

The hotel also owns a three-mile stretch of the river Rede, so this is the ideal base for anglers, and walkers have easy access to the Pennine Way, Kielder Water and Forest Park and the coast aren't far away and another nearby attraction is the even more grand and no less haunted Alnwick Castle (parts of which stand in for Harry Potter's Hogwarts).

And that brings us nicely to the ghosts of Otterburn Tower. As a Norman castle in a reluctantly conquered land right on the borders with Scotland, Otterburn has seen its share of bloody battles. No doubt this explains one of its most persistent hauntings: the sound of marching feet. The tramp-tramp of invisible boots hasn't just been heard in the grounds but also within the fabric of the building itself - possibly in areas once open to the sky.

According to Rob Kirkup, author of *Ghostly Northumberland* (History Press, 2008), the

mysterious marching isn't the only unearthly sound you may hear. He writes: 'Strange, inexplicable sounds ranging from whispering to screaming and clawing noises have also been heard late at night.'

Inexplicable and unidentifiable smells which mysteriously come and go have also been reported by visitors. Otterburn only seems to have one apparition, however, and she is as enigmatic as the strange sounds and smells. She is a traditional Grey Lady who has been seen wandering along the passageways after dark. But who she is and why she still walks is as yet unknown.

Otterburn Tower Country House Hotel offers the opportunity to stay in a genuine haunted castle, and in the heart of one of England's unspoiled rural counties.

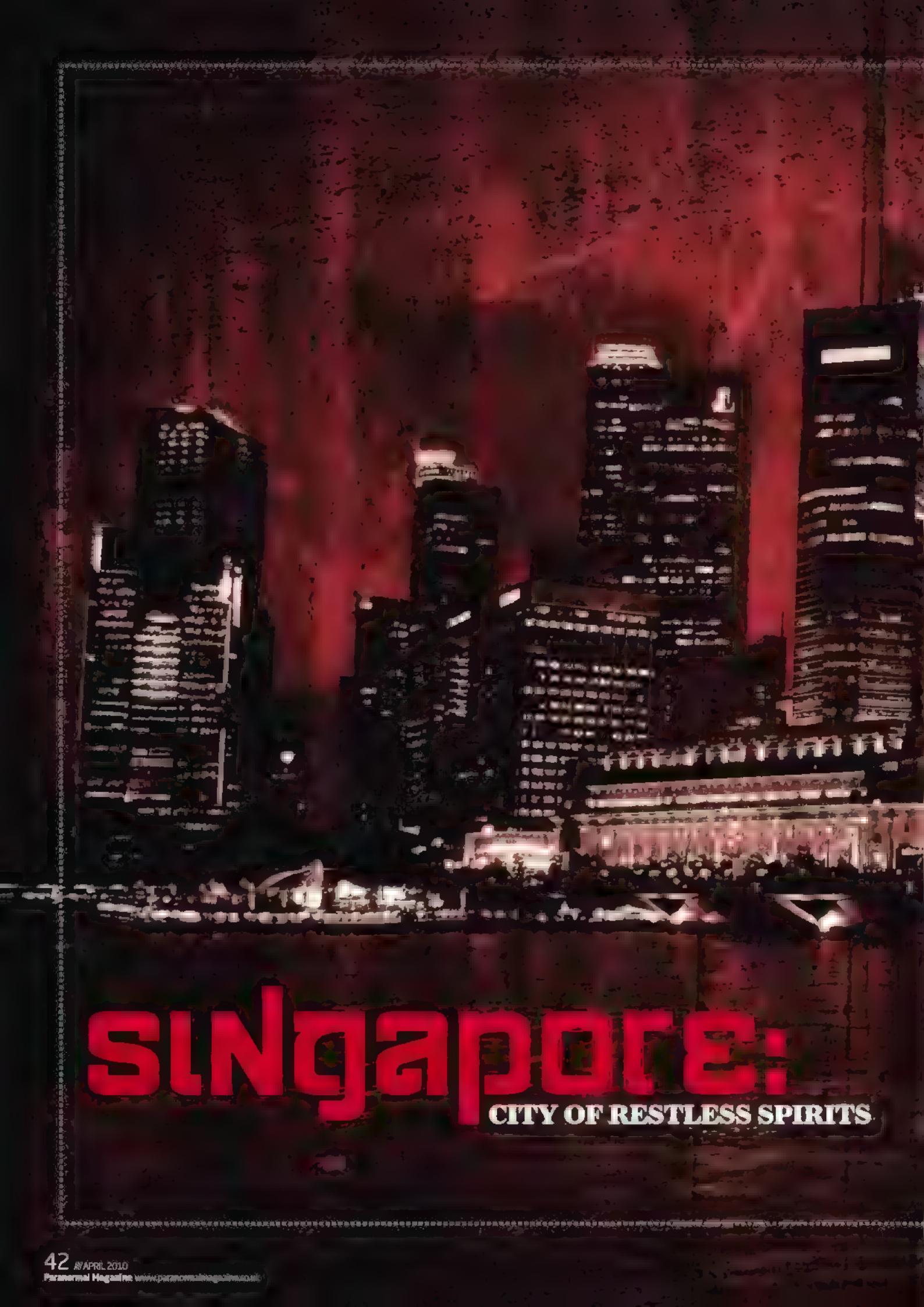
The Editor

FACTFILE

Otterburn Tower Country House Hotel & Restaurant, Otterburn, Northumberland, NE19 1NS.
Tel: (01830) 520620
email: info@otterburntower.com
www.otterburntower.com

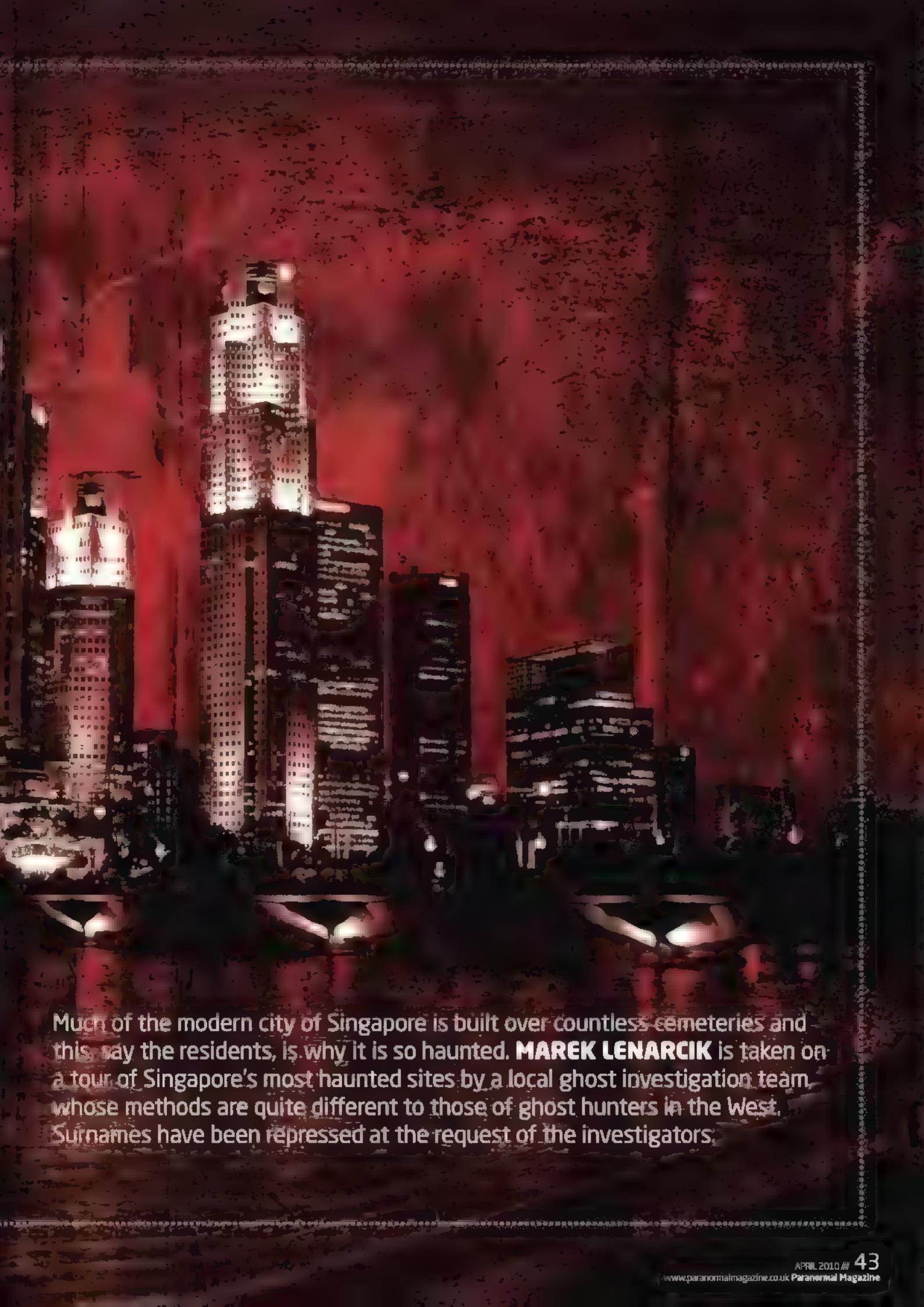
- Medieval architecture
- AA 3-star hotel
- Award-winning restaurant
- Adjacent inn and bar
- 17 en-suite rooms
- Rural location with extensive grounds
- Lots to see and do nearby
- Special offer breaks
- Ideal for weddings and conferences





SINGAPORE:

CITY OF RESTLESS SPIRITS



Much of the modern city of Singapore is built over countless cemeteries and this, say the residents, is why it is so haunted. **MAREK LENARCIK** is taken on a tour of Singapore's most haunted sites by a local ghost investigation team, whose methods are quite different to those of ghost hunters in the West. Surnames have been repressed at the request of the investigators.



OUT OF THE SHADOWS OF THE SOARING SKYSCRAPERS emerges the unknown face of Singapore – the haunted city built on the sites of cemeteries. At the Bishan metro station I have arranged to meet Carol, head of investigations with Singapore Paranormal Investigators (SPI). It's an apt choice, for this is allegedly the most haunted station in Singapore. Why? Because it has been built on an old Chinese

cemetery. Singaporeans gossip about ghosts sighted on the trains as they pull into the station. Chinese cemeteries feature strongly in the ghost beliefs of Singapore. One of the characteristics of these burial grounds is that the graves are placed irregularly – on the hills and on the plains, on the open fields and under the trees. Among richly decorated graves there are others in a state of disarray, from which the bodies

'SINGAPOREAN LAW STATES THAT THE DEAD CAN BE BURIED FOR NO MORE THAN 40 YEARS. THE REGAINED SPACE IS THEN USED FOR NEW BODIES... OR A NEW HOUSING ESTATE.'



have been exhumed by order of the government. Singaporean law states that the dead can be buried for no more than 40 years. The regained space is then used for new bodies... or a new housing estate. Many modern buildings are built on the sites of former graves.

Mount Pleasant cemetery is infamous for sightings of Pontianacs. In Malaysian legend

GRAVE CONCERN: Space is at a premium in Singapore and many of its stylish modern buildings have their foundations in former Chinese cemeteries.



"People have reported to us that a ghost lives in the reservoir. It drowns people who come here at night."

'People have reported to us that a ghost lives in the reservoir,' said Carol. 'It drowns people who come here at night.'

Is the spirit of the woman in the grave responsible? So far SPI have been unable to find out but their investigation continues.

HORROR HOSPITAL

We continue our ghostly tour with a trip to one of Singapore's most notoriously haunted sites, the Old Changi Hospital. On the way we pass Changi Beach, where during World War 2, the Japanese massacred many people on the coast. It is no surprise to learn that the beach is also reputedly haunted.

'We have received reports about victims' ghosts running around the beach and a woman in a white dress seen sitting on a tree,' Carol told me.

But this is just an appetiser before the main attraction. During its 70-year history, Old Changi Hospital was also a witness to the horrors of the war. It saw the fall of Singapore and brutal tortures on the prisoners captured by the Japanese, many of whom died in the hospital. It is said the ghosts of these unfortunate people have remained here.

The hospital was closed in 1997 and since then the buildings have begun to decay: the walls, floors and roofs falling apart. Entrance is prohibited but it's clear many



MASTER SANNA: One of the most famous traditional healers and exorcists in Singapore. His healing lamp therapy is intended to remove the negative energy in the body with a positive one that will chase away evil spirits. Visit www.seanchanhealing.org for more info.

A visit to Master Sanna

Part way through my ghost tour, we call on a friend of SPI's, Master Sanna, who specialises in feng shui, healing lamp therapy - and exorcisms. Master Sanna asks me to lie down with my eyes closed on a comfy matress. Then he lights a healing lamp just behind my head and begins to chant in an unfamiliar language. His intentions to disperse the negative energy in my body and replace it with a positive one. I have to admit that, other than the heat from the lamp, I didn't feel anything different.

After the ceremony, Master Sanna shows us a brief video of selected cases he has dealt with in the past, including that of Dr Kenny Fong, who started SPI in 2001. We see Dr Fong undergoing the same treatment I have just experienced. He begins to shake violently and his eyes turn up into his head. Master Sanna interprets this as a typical case of possession.

'I got rid of the ghost from Kenny's body during a few healing lamp therapy sessions,' he says.

So, maybe my lack of reaction to the healing lamp session is actually a good sign?

a Pontianac is a woman who died during the childbirth and who is revived to seek revenge. Half-ghost, half-human, she hides in the banana trees, and then jumps down on her victims, killing them savagely using her sharp teeth and claws. Many taxi drivers refuse to drive to Mount Pleasant - or should that be 'Unpleasant'? - for fear of the Pontianacs.

Carol told me: 'Many taxi drivers say that when they have come here they have found their money has turned into leaves and flowers.' [Recalling European fairytale - Editor].

One isolated grave is proving of particular interest to SPI. Located at MacRitchie Reservoir, no one knows the identity of the woman who was buried here almost 130 years ago.



'He takes me into a small room without windows and shows me brass Nails sticking out of the walls. "This was a torture chamber," he tells me.'

still come here. The walls are covered in graffiti bearing sinister messages like: 'The ghosts will haunt you forever', '666 Prayer Room - do not disturb' and 'We are watching you'. In many places fresh food has been left behind by the visitors: offerings for the unquiet spirits.

Nigel, one of the SPI agents, strolls around the hospital like it was his own back yard. He admits he has never seen a ghost but the place still fascinates him. He takes me into a small room without windows and shows me brass nails sticking out of the thick, noise-proof walls.

'This was a torture chamber,' he tells me. 'I don't have any special gift when it comes to sensing ghosts but even

I can sense strong, negative energy in this room.'

Not far from the Old Changi Hospital there is a small holiday resort, which is also allegedly haunted. One of the members of staff, who did not wish to be named, admitted: 'Many guests plan to stay here for three or four nights but some of them check out just a few hours after dusk. They never come back.'

ALONE WITH THE GHOSTS

The next stopping off point on my unusual trip is another burial ground, this time an old Muslim cemetery in the Kranji district. SPI's investigations here are always two-fold: first they visit during the day to have a good look around and then again after dusk to carry out their experiments.

Carol explains: 'Muslim ghosts tend to be shy. When we enter the cemetery, we're careful not to mention that we will be making a return visit in the evening, because they will run away.'

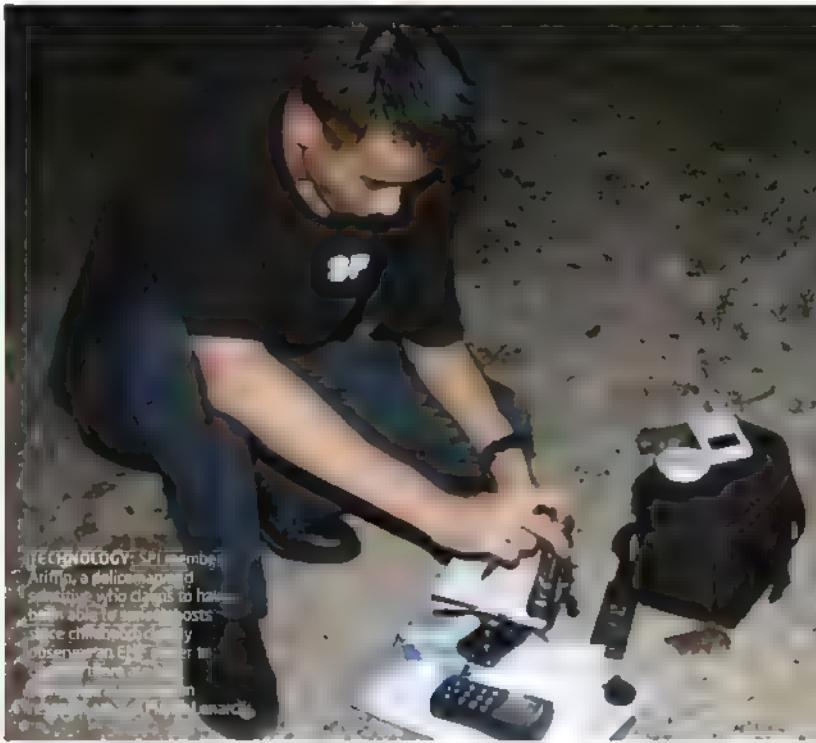
SPI members Ariffin, a 24-year-old policeman, and Ridwin, an industrial nurse in his thirties, are also with us. They both claim to be 'talented' in seeing, hearing and sensing ghosts but are technically minded, too. They set up infrared cameras, humidity and temperature sensors and half-a-dozen other gadgets which I can't name.

As I follow Carol around the cemetery, I try to memorise its layout, because I am going to be coming back here, too, after dark. I hope to make contact with the ghosts myself.

Much later, standing alone among the graves, armed only with a humidity meter. I swallow hard then call out into the darkness: 'If you are here move my meter. If you are here show yourself. If

Mark Lepack is a journalist with 14 years experience and education in international politics. In September 2009, he moved to Southeast Asia to look for interesting stories from this fascinating region. In this last decade Mark has reported from the United States, Israel, Iran, Morocco, Thailand and many European countries. His publications have been featured in *The Washington Times*, *Playboy Magazine*, *Daily POLSKA* (in association with *The Times*) and many others. He has also worked with *BC Radio Ulster* and *RTE RADIO 1* (Ireland). Mark holds an M.Phil in International Peace Studies from Trinity College Dublin in Ireland and a BA in Political Science from Warsaw School of Social Psychology in Poland. He is currently based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Visit: <http://marklepack.com>



TECHNOLOGY: SPI member Ariffin, a 24-year-old software engineer who claims to have been able to see ghosts like this hooded entity, uses an infrared camera to record his findings.

you are here give me a sign.'

I keep repeating this for half an hour. In the second minute of the experiment, the humidity meter shows a drop in value by 10%. At the same moment thousands of crickets which had been singing in the nearby bushes fall silent. Exactly 10 minutes later the crickets resume their concert and the level of humidity returns to its previous level.

When the team come to fetch me sometime later I ask Carol if my experience had any significance.

'Usually when the sounds of nature, like singing crickets, disappear, it is something to watch out for,' she said. 'The humidity meter is still being tested. We are having single cases and we are trying to correlate it with other data.'

ECHOES OF BLOODSHED

We have one more location to visit, another place made haunted by the horrors of war. This is a former military camp in the Sarimbun area, from which the Japanese began their offensive of Singapore. SPI has received lots of reports from witnesses who have seen the marching ghosts of Japanese soldiers or heard 'terrible howling'.

On a small field surrounded by trees SPI places two piles of scraps of paper bearing Chinese symbols: an offering for the ghosts. We set one stack on fire.

'The team leave an offering of two glasses containing Japanese sake and white wine. If the ghosts are thirsty, the levels of the drinks will be found to have gone down.'

'If the ghosts accept the offering, the second pile will set on fire by itself,' explains Carol.

But we are unsuccessful. The fire dies out after few minutes and the second stack remains untouched. Undaunted, we move to another part of the former camp, where the team leave an offering of glasses, coloured red, containing Japanese Sake and white wine. The idea is that if the ghosts are thirsty, the levels of the drinks will be found to have gone down. After a patient wait, though, we find nothing has changed. They've not even taken a sip.

SPI tries one last experiment in the camp. They ask two new volunteers, Serene and Meisi, sociology students from the local university, to help them. The girls seem terrified and reluctant to take part. They had expected to be spending just the day with SPI but their professor insisted they join in with all the experiments - including those taking place after dark.

Surrounded by SPI's gadgets, Serene and Meisi have been asked to sit down facing a

OFFERING: Ariffin checks the level of the liquids in the small red glasses, hoping that the ghosts of the Japanese camp may have taken a sip from them. © Magic Images



SOLDIERING ON: SPI investigator Nigel searches for ghosts in the former Japanese military camp. Witnesses have reported sightings of ghostly soldiers marching in the area. © Magic Images

belt of trees pointed out by Ridwin. A small yellow ball is resting in front of them.

Quaveringly, Serene calls out: 'If you are here, move the ball. If you are here give us a sign. If you are here show yourself.'

Perhaps to the girls' relief, nothing happens; the yellow ball remains in place and the gadgets stay quiet. Nevertheless, Ridwin is sure the ghosts were present.

'I felt their presence in the trees,' he said. 'It was like some energy was pushing towards me.'

Although these experiments have proved unsuccessful, this is not always the case, SPI assures me. Sometimes their activities can attract very negative energies indeed.

'We can be possessed,' Ariffin tells me. 'Or sometimes the ghosts will follow us home. To avoid this we never go straight back home after the research. We take detours.'

With this unnerving thought, SPI drops me at the nearest taxi rank. It occurs to me that changing cars from SPI's to a taxi might count as 'not going straight back home'. I hope so, but I feel uneasy after my adventures. I wake up several times during the rest of the night. I keep looking around my room, feeling that something is there every time I close my eyes. It's probably just my brain playing tricks on me - but can I be sure? ●





The World's Most Paranormal Place?

Isolated amidst thousands of miles of ocean and former home to a number of weird and long-lost cults, Easter Island tops the list of paranormal holiday destinations. **KARL SHUKER** made the long trip and found it a fascinating and unnerving experience.

IN A RECENT SURVEY to find the world's most paranormal locality, the runaway winner was a certain tiny triangular island (no more than 25 km across) separated by over 2,000 km of Pacific Ocean from any other inhabited locality.

Formerly home to an extraordinary birdman cult, and ringed by enormous stone statues with an alienesque appearance that stare across their lonely domain through sightless eye-sockets, where else could this be but Rapanui or, as we know it better in the West, Easter Island?

MEETING THE MOAI

A special territory of Chile since 1888, Easter Island is so-named because it was first encountered by Europeans on Easter Sunday 1722, when it was reached by Dutch explorer Admiral Jacob Roggeveen.

In April 2008, I fulfilled the ambition of a lifetime by finally visiting this remarkable island, which contains three extinct volcanoes, a lush but entirely artificial flora and fauna almost entirely introduced by man from elsewhere and just one

town, Hanga Roa (with roughly 3,500 inhabitants).

When I arrived on Rapanui, I found Hanga Roa recalled a 19th-century frontier town that had somehow been transported by cyclone far from its Wild West homeland and unceremoniously dropped down upon a fragrant tropical isle. But whereas Dorothy and Toto met the munchkins and the Wizard of Oz, I met the moai.

No amount of photographs or films can prepare you for the sheer scale and majesty of these gigantic stone statues, Easter Island's most •





ON PARADE: A line of moai re-erected on their sacred platform, or ahu, at Ahu Akivi. © Kar Shuker

famous denizens, coldly aloof and silent, their thin lips and haughty visage radiating Ozymandian disdain. Numbering over 800 in total, many are still inside the quarry, within the eastern volcano Rano Raraku, where they were originally hewn from tufa (an igneous rock ash). Some lie there fully formed, waiting for the acolytes that will never come, to transport them out of the volcano and down the slopes, to be erected with honour as protective icons upon a ceremonial stone platform known as an ahu.

Once greatly venerated as the representations of their sculptors' ancestral leaders, and also as the earthly vessels of their leaders' spirits, even today the moai command respect and deference – it is illegal even to touch one.

Having said that, some moai

have not even been detached from the inner rock face from which they were carved. Consequently, everywhere you look within this volcano's depths there is a surreal juxtaposition of heads, noses, brows, ears, and eye-sockets like a nightmare of Picasso's, Dali's, or Hieronymus Bosch's.

A fair few did make the journey out, however, and today they can be found in many locations around the island. A number stand half-buried in grassy soil on Rano Raraku's outer slopes, like a scattering of abandoned chess pieces on a giant's forgotten chessboard. Others still lie in prone humiliation, where they were deliberately tipped over centuries ago by warring clans.

In modern



NO AMOUNT OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR FILMS CAN PREPARE YOU FOR THE SHEER SCALE AND MAJESTY OF THESE GIGANTIC STONE STATUES.'

UP AND DOWN: Most of the complete statues were found knocked over on Easter Island. This is presumed to have been done deliberately by rival gangs. In this photo the recently re-erected moai at Ahu Tongariki can be seen behind a still recumbent statue

times a select company have been raised and re-erected onto their ahus at various sites by teams of visiting researchers. With the exception of an ahu of seven moai at Ahu Akivi at the island's centre, which look out towards the sea, all moai were originally erected by their sculptors near the island's edge and faced inward, overlooking their clans as protective effigies.

A HISTORY OF MYSTERY

Until Thor Heyerdahl's famous first archaeological dig here during the 1950s, it was not generally realised that a moai is more than just a giant head. So many moai had become half-buried by centuries of encroachment from sediment and plant life that it had not been previously realised that a moai is carved down to the



FULL AHEAD: Many of the colossal Easter Island statues remain half-buried in the soil and vegetation which has encroached over the centuries since they were abandoned (above). As recently as the 1950s the 'heads' were first found to be complete torsos (left). © Kar Shuker



MANY VISITORS HAVE REPORTED EXPERIENCING A DARK FEELING OF OPPRESSION AND APPREHENSION WHEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THESE STARK, BROODING SENTINELS.'

hips, with a pair of spindly arms and long-fingered hands pressed closely to its bulbous torso's sides.

On Rano Raraku, I encountered torso-buried heads that were 6m tall, so when you add to that the height of the hidden body, it becomes evident that these extraordinary statues are far bigger than anything even remotely similar to be found elsewhere in the world. Biggest of all is El Gigante, which would have stood a colossal 23m high if it had ever been transported out of Rano Raraku, but this petrified giant remains here, its vast weight (estimated at over 145 tonnes) probably proving too much for even the most enthusiastic workers to overcome.

Like so much of Easter Island's past, the history of the moai is shrouded in controversy. Estimates as to when they were created vary by as much as a millennium depending upon the authority consulted. The current consensus is that the island was first colonised in the 4th century AD, by seafaring Polynesians, who subsequently split into separate, independent clans or kin-groups, and began constructing ahus and carving statues of modest proportions a few centuries later. By the 15th Century, however, moai production had reached frenzied proportions, as indeed had the moai themselves – now monstrously huge. Then, so abruptly that many of these statues

were simply abandoned where they lay, production ceased. This is believed to be due to increasing rivalry developing between the clans, culminating in battles and, as highly symbolic desecration, purposefully toppling over each other's sacred moai.

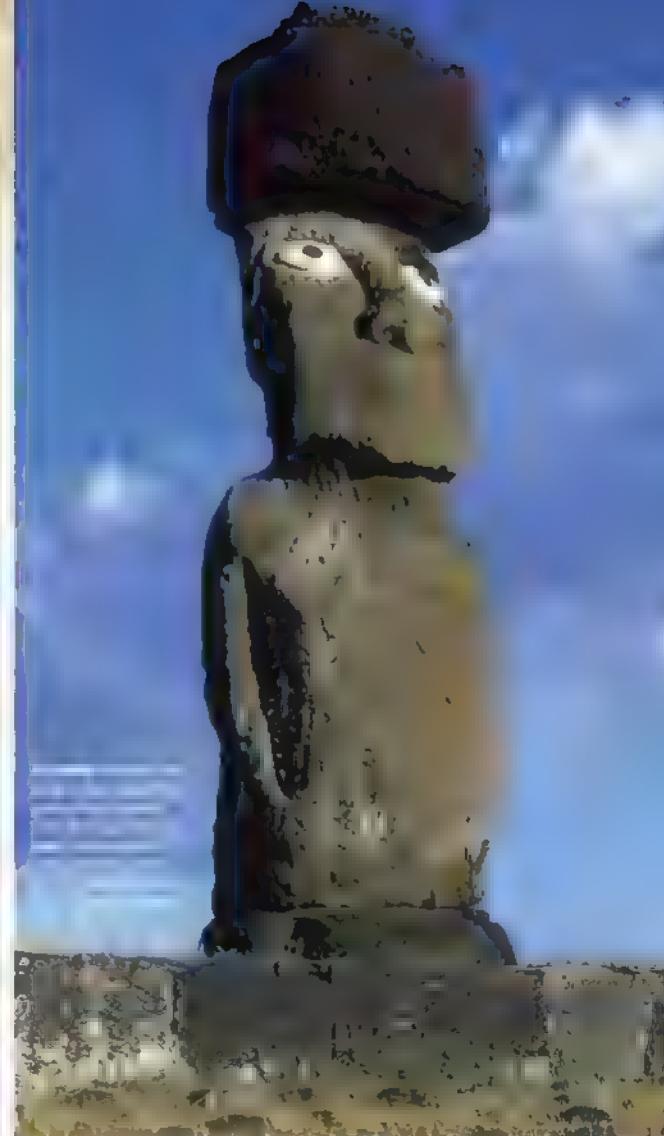
Another factor is the wholesale destruction of the island's once-luxuriant native foliage, most notably the giant palm trees that were eventually felled across the entire island. Their sturdy trunks were used as rollers on which to transport the moai from Rano Raraku to their chosen sites elsewhere, but once the palm trees had vanished, the moai could no longer be moved.

ALIEN RAYS AND THE STATUES THAT WALKED...?

Having said that, tree-trunk rollers are not the only mode of transport that has been proffered. Proponents of the ancient astronauts school of belief have suggested that visiting aliens transported and erected the moai using anti-gravitational beams. Another suggestion is that the natives somehow levitated the moai by harnessing electromagnetism. And my Rapanui-born guide noted that according to traditional native lore, the moai themselves very obligingly walked to their chosen sites during the night, utilising a special life-force called mana.

What is certain is that the moai are certainly left alone following the onset of darkness, because even during the sunny daylight hours many visitors have reported experiencing a dark, unfathomable feeling of oppression and apprehension when in the presence of these stark, brooding sentinels.

Some moai originally bore on their heads a huge ceremonial topknot or pukao, carved from red scoria rock transported from Puna Pau, a quarry in the island's southwestern region. How these enormous blocks were raised onto the moai's heads, well over 6m high in some cases, remains unresolved. A few of the lately re-



erected moai have their pukao in place, but these were placed there using modern-day cranes.

Most intriguing of all, thanks to the unearthing of an intact example in recent years, is the realisation that the moai originally had eyes. These were made from white shells with pupils of black obsidian, but were destroyed or removed during the inter-clan battles that marked the end of moai production. ●

INDECIPHERABLE:
A replica of a slab featuring the long lost language of rongorongo. © Kari Shuker



THE RIDDLE OF RONGORONGO

As if the moai, birdmen and assorted ghosts were not mysterious enough, Easter Island can also boast an indecipherable native script language – rongorongo. Carved on wood, these hieroglyphics could only be read by the native elders and priests, but when Peruvian slave raiders reached the Island during the 1850s-60s, all of its educated native men were transported to Peru's guano mines as slaves, where they soon died, leaving no-one behind on Easter Island who could decipher the rongorongo tablets. Even today, these cryptic scripts remain largely unreadable and the few surviving tablets are priceless relics in museums.





THE GHOSTS OF THE ANCESTRAL LONG-EARED CLAN CHIEFS [ARE] SAID TO HAUNT THIS SUBTERRANEAN DOMAIN.

BIRD-HEADED MEN AND LONG-EARED GHOSTS

Less famous but no less extraordinary than the moai of Easter Island, and further earning it its claim as the world's most mysterious location, is its erstwhile birdman cult. The cliff faces around Rano Kau, the island's westernmost volcano, are liberally etched with striking birdman petroglyphs depicting bizarre bird-headed humanoids, often curled up in almost foetal pose – which is fitting, given that this volcano's slopes also harbour a prehistoric village called Orongo that contains many remarkable stone houses supposedly representing the human womb.

Until as recently as 1878, when the arrival of Christianity here swiftly suppressed it, the election of the Birdman each September was a very significant event. Every clan sent a representative to Orongo to compete for the birdman title. The competition consisted of scaling down the steep, jagged cliffs of Rano Kau into the sea and swimming through shark-infested waters to a small outlying islet called Moto Nui, where the objective was to collect an egg newly-laid there by a small seabird called the sooty tern, and bring it back safely to Orongo. The winner would be duly crowned the Birdman or Tangata Manu, bringing great glory and esteemed status to his clan, because the Birdman was deemed to be the living reincarnation of Makemake, Easter Island's fertility deity. He would then be taken away to live in solitude for the next 12 months

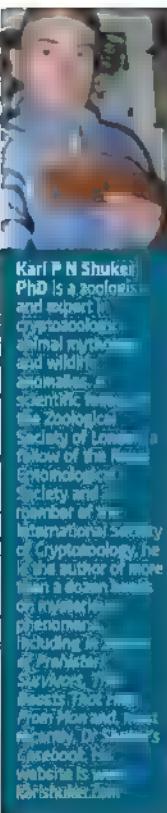
inside a sacred cave on the other end of the island, at the foot of Rano Raraku.

The birdman cult is no more, and even its origin remains unknown, but its image lives on, sometimes in the most surprising locations. There are a number of underground cave systems on the island, including Cave of the Cannibals, whose walls are profusely decorated with birdman carvings, but when viewing them, just pray that the light does not illuminate the cave's more frightening inhabitants – the moai-kava-kava, the ghosts of the ancestral long-eared clan chiefs, said to haunt this subterranean domain!

The birdman image has also been utilised abundantly in modern-day signs and gifts for sale in Hanga Roa, but perhaps the most unexpected location for birdmen is inside the town's church, where Christian icons share its inner sanctum with statues of bird-headed humans.

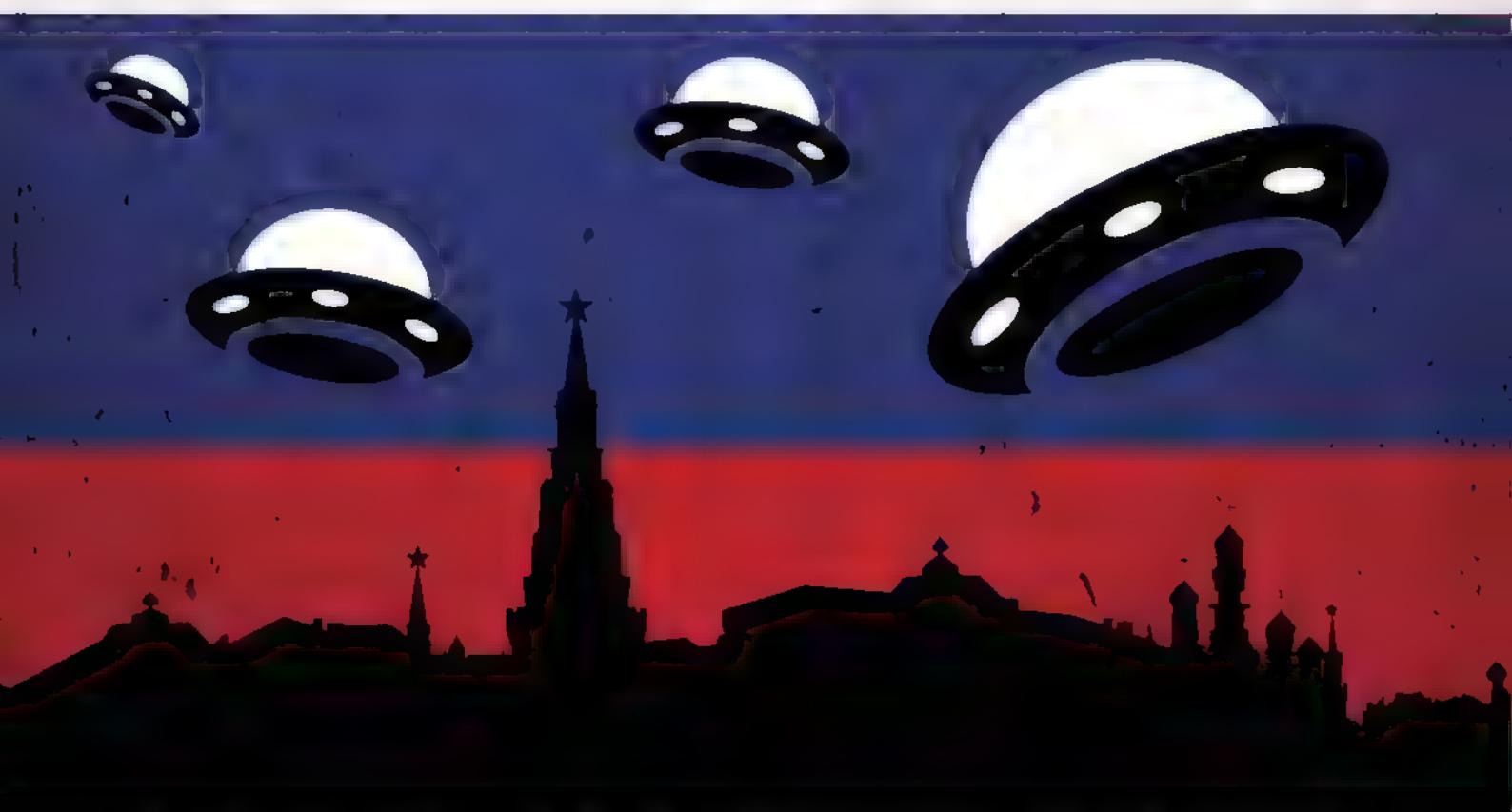
Although Easter Island may not lay claim to such overtly supernatural phenomena as

headless horsemen, baying werewolves or weeping statues, as someone who has experienced the truly unearthly nature of this strange locality, I can well appreciate why this lonely Pacific island has been voted the world's most paranormal place. Sometimes, not seeing a ghost (long-eared or otherwise) can be more unnerving than seeing one! ●



Karl P N Shuker
PhD is a zoologist and expert in cryptozoology, animal myths and wildlife anomalies. A scientific member of the Zoological Society of London, fellow of the Royal Entomological Society and a member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, he is the author of more than a dozen books on mysterious phenomena, including *Encyclopedia of Un-Natural Survivals*, *Encyclopedia of Monsters That Hunt*, *Alien Men and Women*, *Reptile, Dragon and Beastie* and *Witches Is There*. For further details, visit www.karlshuker.com

THE RUSSIAN ROSWELL: Probing the Dalnegorsk UFO crash



Working with colleagues in Russia, **PHILIP MANTLE** and **PAUL STONEHILL** re-examine one of the former Soviet Union's most puzzling UFO mysteries.

THIS INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS UFO incident took place in 1986, on January 29, at 7:55 pm. Some have called it the Roswell Incident of the Soviet Union. The information concerning this incident was sent to us by a number of Russian ufologists.

Dalnegorsk is a small mining town in the Far East of Russia. That cold January day a reddish sphere flew into this town from the southeast, crossed part of Dalnegorsk, and crashed at the Izvestkovaya Mountain (also known as Height or Hill 611, because of its size). The object flew noiselessly, and parallel to the ground; it was approximately three metres in diameter, of a near-perfect round shape, with no projections or cavities, its colour similar to that of burning stainless steel.

One eyewitness, V. Kandakov, said that the speed of the UFO was close to 15 metres per hour.

The object slowly ascended and descended, and its glow would heat up every time it rose up. On its approach to Height 611 the object 'jerked', and fell down like a ton of bricks. It burned intensively at the cliff's edge for an hour.

A geological expedition to the site, led by V. Skavinsky of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics

'ON ITS APPROACH THE OBJECT "JERKED" AND FELL DOWN LIKE A TON OF BRICKS. IT BURNED INTENSIVELY AT THE CLIFF'S EDGE FOR AN HOUR.'

of the Siberian Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (1988), had confirmed the object's movements through a series of chemical and physical tests of the rocks collected from the site. Valeri Dvuzhilni, head of the Far Eastern Committee for Anomalous Phenomena, was the first to investigate the crash. With the help of our colleagues in

Russia this is the most accurate account of the incident to date.

Dr Dvuzhilni arrived at the site two days after the crash. Deep snow covered the area at the time. The site of the crash, located on a rocky ledge, was devoid of snow. All around the site remnants of silica-splintered, 'smoky-looking' rocks were found. Many pieces, and a nearby rock,

contained particles of silvery metal, some 'spray'-like, some in the form of small solidified balls.

At the edge of the site a burnt tree-stump was found to be giving off a chemical smell. The objects collected at the site were later dubbed as 'tiny nets', 'little balls', 'lead balls', and 'glass pieces'. Closer examination revealed very unusual properties. •



ENIGMAS: Examples of the tiny silvery balls and mesh-like forms discovered at the site of the supposed crash. So far no firm conclusion as to their origin has been made

'NEITHER THE PHYSICISTS NOR METALLURGISTS COULD REACH A DEFINITE CONCLUSION AFTER TESTING THE SAMPLES.'

One of the 'tiny nets' contained torn and very thin (17-micrometre) threads. Each of the threads consisted of even thinner fibres, tied up in plaits. Intertwined with the fibres were very thin gold wires.

Soviet scientists, at such facilities as the Omsk branch of the Academy of Sciences, analyzed all collected pieces, finding them to be highly complex. The 'iron balls', for example, were composed of iron mixed with aluminum, manganese, nickel, chromium, tungsten and cobalt - in other words, an alloy. When melted in a vacuum, some pieces would spread out, while others would form into balls. Half of the balls were covered with convex glass-like structures.

Neither the physicists nor metallurgists could reach a definite conclusion after testing these samples. Of the 'mesh' A. Kulikov, an expert on carbon at the Chemistry Institute of the Far Eastern Department of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, wrote that it resembled glass carbon,

but conditions leading to such a formation were unknown. He confirmed fire alone could not produce such a substance. The only thing that could be more or less easily explained was the ash found on site. Something biological had burned during the crash: a flock of birds, perhaps, or a stray dog?

Dr Dvuzhilni's article was published in the Soviet (Uzbekistan) Magazine *NLO: Chto, Gde, Kogda?* (Issue 1, 1990, reprint of an article in *FENOMEN Magazine*, March 23, 1990). In his article *Dalnegorsk Phenomenon V. Dvuzhilni* provides details unavailable elsewhere.

The southwesterly trajectory of the object just about coincides with the Xichang Cosmodrome of the People's Republic of China, where satellites are launched into geo-synchronous orbit. There is no data of any rocket launches in the PRC at the end of January. Similarly there were no rocket launches at any of the Soviet cosmodromes either that could account for this crash.

There is another curious detail: at the site of the Height 611 small fragments of a light grey material were discovered, but only in the area of the crash. These specimens did not match any of the local varieties of soil. Indeed, the spectroscopic analysis of the specimens matched them to material from the Yaroslavl area, rather than those Dalnegorsk.

Eight days after the UFO crash at Height 611, on February 8, 1986, at 8:30 pm, two more yellowish spheres flew from the north, in a southward direction. Reaching the site of the crash, they circled it four times, then turned back to the north and flew away.

On November 28, 1987, at 11.24 pm, 32 flying objects appeared from nowhere, witnessed by hundreds of people, including members of the military. The objects flew over 12 different settlements, and 13 of them flew to Dalnegorsk and the site. Three of the UFOs hovered over the settlement, and five of them illuminated the nearby mountain. The objects moved noiselessly, at an altitude between 150 to 800 metres. None of the eyewitnesses thought they were UFOs but assumed they

were aircraft involved in some disaster. As the objects flew over houses they interfered with the locals TV reception. Another group of eyewitnesses included workers from a quarry at Bor. At 11.00pm they observed a giant cylindrical object flying straight towards them. Its length was estimated to around 200 or 300 metres. The front part of the object was brightly lit.

Half an hour later, one of the quarry's managers, a Mr Levakov, observed a huge, cigar-shaped object slowly moving at an altitude of 300 metres. Mr Levakov stated that he was well acquainted with aircraft and had never seen anything like this before in his life.

Dr Dvuzhilni's conclusion is that the object that crashed on Hill 611 was a malfunctioning alien space probe. Another hypothesis has it that the object managed to ascend and escape (almost in one piece) in the north-easterly direction and probably crashed in the dense taiga.

There are, of course, opposing opinions. V. Psalomschikov, an expert on aircraft crashes, and a well-known journalist, stated that the object was a Soviet-built remotely piloted vehicle and that the technology to produce it dates back to 1970s. He claims he has similar ultra-thin filaments in his possession.

A Russian ufologist and scientist, Gennady Belimov, presented information in 1993 that a Soviet military probe had crashed at Height 611. His proof was based on similar crashes of highly classified Soviet probes. As for the lead collected at the site, Belimov believes it was extracted



RESEARCHER: Dr Valeri Dvuzhilni, head of the Far Eastern Committee for Anomalous Phenomena, was the first to investigate the crash.

from the Kholodnensky deposit in the Northern Baikal region.

A new generation of Russian UFO researchers has reached the conclusion that the probe was an aerostatics reconnaissance vehicle possibly equipped to make infrared photographs. The speed of the probe was estimated to be approximately 54 km per hour, which would negate Dr Dvuzhilni's data. But even among them there is no consistent belief as to the origin of the probe. Vladimir Smoly, for example, does not believe there was a thermite self-destruction device aboard the probe, since the self-destruction would be immediate, unlike what had apparently happened to the crashed object.

Russian newspaper *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* in its December 1, 2000, issue published an article about the Dalnegorsk case (*NLO svili v Primorje gnezdo*) by Andrey Pavlov, in which he refers to anti-aircraft forces in the early 1990s becoming concerned about the UFO activity in the area and contacting local UFO researchers. An exchange of information ensued. It is significant when a major Russian newspaper mentions such a fact (the author actually quoted Dr Dvuzhilni, the chief investigator of the Height 611 UFO crash).

According to Alexander Rempel (*NLO Magazine*, 1999) very few Russian ufologists recall the crash, or pay attention to it. Alexander Rempel informed participants of the UFOMIND Russian UFO Forum that fragments of the crashed object have been examined in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and Munich, Liege and other places. In 2000, four Japanese and Korean expeditions examined Height 611.

Ufologists from Korea and Japan have made offers to purchase the 'balls'. The current price for one gram of any fragment is \$500, and the price has been going up. Rempel notes that differing conclusions as to their origin have been reached by a number of institutes and laboratories in Russia and abroad. There is no firm conclusion on either side of the extraterrestrial or terrestrial debate but some peculiarities still cannot be explained.



'32 FLYING OBJECTS APPEARED FROM NOWHERE, WITNESSED BY HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY.'

Since 2000 nothing anomalous has been reported from the area. Russian ufologists show little or no interest in the famous case, states Rempel, except for those in Vladivostok. Two exhibits of the Height 611 incident are active: one is in the Dalnegorsk museum and the other in the UFO Museum in Vladivostok. There are hundreds of witnesses, including dozens of actual eyewitnesses, and many drawings of the incident.

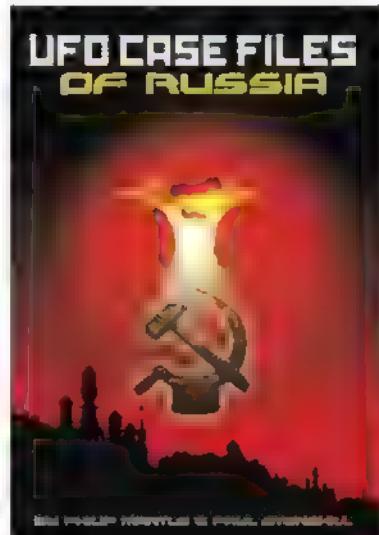
We must mention another interpretation of the Dalnegorsk crash that was published in Soviet newspaper *Ribak Primorya* (Issue 14, 1991). According to Author Y. Vasilyev, V. Dvuzhilni and a group of his students thoroughly searched the site of the crash three times and found tiny metallic drops. All the required measurements, as well as photographs, were taken. Then they initiated physical and chemical analyses of the findings. They found temperature of the melting was 390°C. The silvery metal was very soft; it was easy to break it with a pair of tweezers.

On February 8, 1986, Dvuzhilni and V. Berliozov, a geologist (who had studied the Sikhote-Alin' meteorite) again ascended the hill. Berliozov confirmed that the crashed object was of cosmic origin, and the traces confirmed this. Its luminescence was similar to that of many meteorites. Five years later, Dvuzhilini came up with further details ('fantastic

details', according to Y. Vasilyev).

Next Vasilyev came up with his own hypothesis. On January 28, 1986, American shuttle *Challenger* exploded in the sky. The force of the explosion was such that the fragments were thrown all over the Atlantic. Is it possible that one of the fragments, flying from the southwest, landed in Dalnegorsk the next day?

There seems to a consensus of opinion that the Height 611 crash may well have a conventional explanation, but exactly what, remains to be seen. It does have its parallels in the West, the Roswell case being one of them, but there are others. Irrespective of this, it is a fascinating case, which is sure to divulge more information and more theories in the years to come. ●



The above is an extract from Philip Mantle & Paul Stonehill's new book 'UFO Case Files of Russia' now available from Healings of Atlantis at: www.healingsofatlantis.com

Another favourite spooky location from a writer's neighbourhood, this time chosen by researcher and budding ghost-hunter ADAM SPINKS.



QUIETLY UNNERVING: The Silent Pool, over which the ghost of the laundress 'Emma' is supposed to float. © Adam Spinks.

Silent Pool

NEAR GUILDFORD, SURREY

LOOK AROUND ON THE INTERNET and you will easily find Silent Pool. Located several miles outside of Guildford town centre beyond Newlands Corner and towards the beautiful little village of Shere, the small lake has gathered quite a status in folklore.

I first caught on to the stories of Silent Pool after I met my partner,

'Why doesn't the water move, why is it such a genuinely creepy place?'

a Guildford area resident. She passed on the stories she heard growing up soon after we started dating and from my first visit I

decided I wanted to know more – why is the water that gorgeous shade of blue, why doesn't the water move, why is it such a



genuinely creepy place?

There are two legends attached to Silent Pool. One involves Stephen Langton, an orphan who had spent many years at a local monastery but who, at the age of 18, fell in love with his cousin Alice after being chucked out to live with an aunt in nearby Albury. One summer's evening, walking in woodland between St Martha's Chapel and Silent Pool, these young lovers were seized by a band of thugs led by none other than the future King of England, Prince John. Alice was carried off, while Stephen was badly beaten and left to die. When he came round, Stephen set off to find Alice: he found her lying unconscious but thought she was dead. The grieving youth vowed to thereafter devote his life to the Church (he was later made Archbishop of Canterbury). When Alice recovered, she also made the mistake of thinking her lover was dead, and she became a nun.

The second not dissimilar legend centres round the supposed disappearance of a young woman named Emma at the Silent Pool. In this version Emma, too, is chased by the brutal hunting party of the future King. She tries to escape them by plunging into the pool but flounders and drowns as the men look on. Her cry of help bring her brother running to the scene but too late to save her. Months later, at an inquest held at Guildford Castle, Emma's father, a woodcutter, presented a single feather at the feet of the King. This feather was shown to be missing from his hat and proved his hand in Emma's cruel murder.

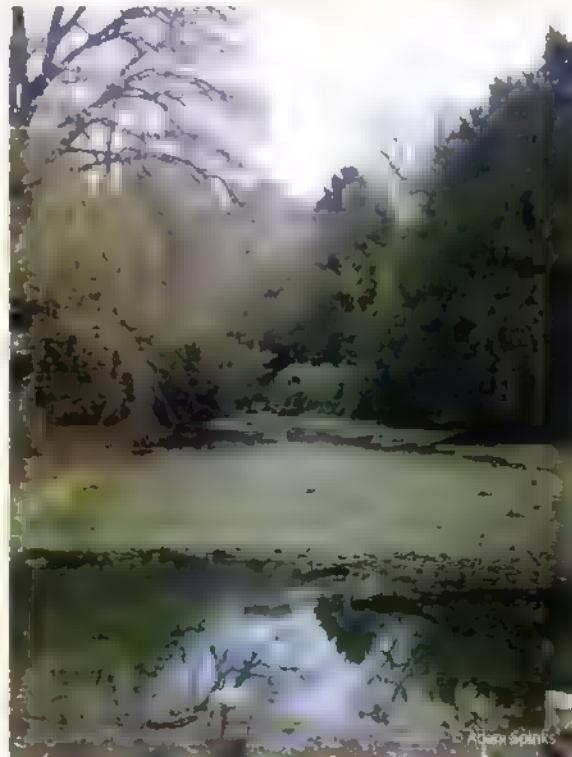
This is the best known version of the legend today, for it is Emma who is identified as the ghost of the young woman, dressed in white, who witnesses claim to have seen floating silently over the Silent Pool. Some say they have heard her screams, others

even claim that she has pleaded with them for help. Others say they have seen or the horses of the hunting party. One witness (who did not wish to be named) told me: 'I heard hooves on the path behind me, thundering up on me fast and then, in an instant, they were gone... I couldn't hear them anymore.'

Other accounts are less dramatic. Guildford resident Natalie Cox remembers: 'I was just walking along with my boyfriend at the time and I could have sworn somebody was following us around that lake.'

Natalie and boyfriend Phillip Biggs agreed to return with me to the lake for an investigation. It was agreed we would brave the Silent Pool at midnight armed with digital stills cameras, an audio recorder and a camcorder with a night vision setting.

We first scouted the immediate surroundings and tried to find



Adam Sparks

'Some say they have heard her screams, others even claim that she has pleaded with them for help.'

possible explanations for some of the phenomena. We noted that there is a farm adjacent to the pool just beyond a copse of trees. These trees give the impression of a much thicker belt of woodland on initial observation. Could the presence of cows and horses roaming in the fields beyond explain the sounds of galloping? Water is notorious for amplifying sound. We experimented by throwing stones into the water at differing velocities to determine the acoustics of the area. We concluded that a stone slipping into the water, perhaps dislodged by an animal or through erosion, could explain some of the audio phenomena reported here.

People visiting the lake may be attaching a paranormal meaning

to normal occurrences. The sounds of the nearby animals, amplified by both the water and the funnel-like structure of the trees around the pool, could become the horses galloping to reclaim Emma in the minds of imaginative people passing by after dark. Furthermore, the pool lies less than 200 metres from the busy A25. The baritone rumblings of a passing lorry could be misleading for a casual observer.

Did Natalie really get followed around the pool that day or, because she knew about the legend, simply attach paranormal meaning to a normal event? We cannot say for certain. At any rate, on the night we spent at Silent Pool we were not lucky enough to capture anything on video or in a photograph that we couldn't rationally explain. Emma did not appear over the lake at midnight, at least not on our cameras. Of course, just because our search for Emma came up empty-handed, does not mean there isn't paranormal activity at Silent Pool. If nothing else, it remains an extraordinarily eerie place. ■

HISTORY OR HYSTERIA?

There appears to be no historical record of the legends of the Silent Pool. Guildford Castle was unable to provide any evidence of an inquest taking place and moreover the author of Haunted Guildford Philip Hutchinson who also runs the local ghost walks every year is adamant the existing stories are entirely work of fiction. He says the stories were made up by one Martin Tupper who allegedly wanted to bring more attention to the Silent Pool which he himself found so inspiring to look at. Hutchinson, who sits on the board of the Ghost Club, believes that there could be some kind of psychosomatic suggestion at work at sites with a legend of a haunting leading to people imagining ghosts and weird noises. And he points out that just because the legends themselves are false it would be wrong to assume the Silent Pool isn't haunted - the area has been occupied since at least the time of the Roman occupation and the ghost, if there is one, could date from any time in the past 2 000 years.



BEASTIES FROM **BELow...**

Following on from last month's article about the Mongolian Death Worm, **RICHARD FREEMAN** introduces a further selection of subterranean monsters, some of which have been encountered not in remote locations but in modern cities and villages.

LAST MONTH MY OLD FRIEND

Dr Karl Shuker wrote about the infamous Mongolian Death Worm. I took an expedition into the Mongolian Gobi on the track of this very beast. On the expedition's 1,000-mile course we interviewed dozens of witnesses and came to the conclusion that the Death Worm was in fact a burrowing reptile, perhaps an undiscovered species of worm lizard or sand boa.

But the Death Worm is just one of many strange beasts said to dwell in deep caves or to burrow through the earth itself. In this article I will look at the weird beasts that might lurk beneath our feet.

In many countries dragons were said to dwell in deep caverns so it should come as no surprise to learn that monster reptiles are among our menagerie of troglodyte monsters.

On January 31, 1897, a story appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette*

written by one Elbert Smithee. It concerned the *gowrow*, a kind of horrid reptilian monster said to lurk in the caverns of the Ozarks. William Miller from Littlerock had recounted the story to Smithee. The *gowrow* was said to emerge at night and devour pets and livestock near Blanco (Seearcy County) in Calf Creek Township. An armed posse tracked it to its lair and managed to kill it with several volleys of gunfire. It was said to have bitten off the leg of



one of the men in its death throes. The beast was described as being 20 feet long, with webbed feet, large tusks, a row of spines along its back and a long thin tail with a 'blade' on the end. The carcass was supposed to have been sent to the Smithsonian Institute but never arrived.

Elsewhere in Arkansas, landowner E J Rhodes decided to explore The Devil's Hole, a great fissure in the ground near Boone Country, in the 1930s. Rhodes and a team of men lowered a line weighted with a piece of iron into the fissure to see how far it would go: it stopped at around 200 feet. To their astonishment they then heard a hissing noise and when they hurriedly pulled up the line, they saw that the metal weight had been

bent. Three times they tied a rock to the rope and threw it down: on each occasion the rope was bitten in two. They decided the Devil's Hole must have been the lair of a gowrow.

The gowrow may well have been nothing more than a newspaper hoax or a 'fearsome critter', a beast made up to scare greenhorns in the wilderness, but other subterranean monster reptiles are not so easily explained.

In South America there is said to lurk a burrowing serpent of mind-boggling dimensions. The *minhocao* was first brought to the attention of Europeans by German scientist Fritz Muller, who was in Brazil in the 19th century studying crustaceans. He began to collect accounts of a burrowing snake-

like monster up to 50 meters long that uprooted trees and left great furrows in the earth. One witness was a German merchant called Freddrich Kelling. He had followed the *minhocao*'s great furrow under the roots of a pine tree and into a lonely swamp, where it was lost.

In 1849 two of the creatures were supposed to have undermined an entire hill near the Rio dos Papagaios. Several years later landowner Lebino Jose dos Santos investigated and found the furrows still there. He estimated the creatures would have been two metres wide. He related that in the same district a woman who went to draw water from a pool found that the pool had been destroyed and a huge creature was seen crawling. •



TROLLS AND GIANTS:
Legends of huge hairy humans living in caves have become the stuff of fairy tales but their origin may date back to occasional sightings of surviving apemen early in our own pre-history

away. On another occasion a young man saw a pine tree uprooted by something burrowing beneath it. He saw the earth heave up and a black, worm-like beast 25 metres long with short, flexible horns on its head, wallowing in a quagmire of its own creation.

Similar accounts can be found from elsewhere in South America. But if you think the minhocao is a creature of the past, think again. On August 19, 1997, villagers in Nuevo Tacana, Peru, saw a 40 metre-long minhocao (which they call *sachamama*, or mother of the jungle) crawling through the jungle close to their village. Witnesses stated that the ground shook like

an earthquake before the monster emerged. It was black and had short, flexible horns on its head. It toppled trees and left a deep trench as it crawled towards the Rio Napa.

As recently as just last year, the Peruvian *El Popular* newspaper reported that a giant snake was terrifying villagers on the Morona Cocha. In June Dolores Shuna and her husband, Don Manuel, were in their lakeside house when they saw the head of a gigantic serpent emerge from beneath a small island. She called her husband but by the time he arrived it had submerged. The creature dragged the island, of around 200 square metres, 40 metres across the lake and smashed it into their house, which was built up on stilts in the water. The couple managed to escape in a canoe as the house was shattered and the wreckage dragged another 60 metres. As they watched, the monster dragged the island back to its original location. They said it looked like a huge, dark tree in the water.

The monster made a reappearance in the following November.

A burrowing monster like the minhocao or sachamama but on a much smaller scale may exist in North America. For around an hour on July 13, 1984, a six metre-long bulge appeared in the surface of a street in Fort Worth, Texas. It rose up two thirds of a metre high and

'THE CREATURE DRAGGED THE ISLAND, 40 METRES ACROSS THE LAKE AND SMASHED IT INTO THEIR HOUSE.'

moved back and forth as if it were alive. Charlie McCaffery, of the fire department, said: 'It seemed almost alive. What spooked me was there wasn't even a crack in the road.'

Shortly afterwards three children spotted a similar disturbance on their homestead on the outskirts of Fort Worth. On telling their father, Calvin Lang, he poked the long bulge with a rake and it vanished beneath the earth. Looking around, he saw that outbuildings had been destroyed, fences knocked down and plants uprooted.

Sometime later, about two miles away, Jeremy Boiter saw a repulsive worm-like monster explode from the earth and grab a cat. The unfortunate moggie and its litter were swallowed by the creature's slobbering maw. Boiter ran three miles to the house of his friend Phil Dewar to tell him what he had seen. When they returned to the spot, the monster had gone but in the ruins of a small building it had demolished they found the remains of birds, rabbits and other small animals.

Not all burrowing monsters are huge. One small but creepy kind is said to inhabit Banffshire in Scotland. The *earth hounds* are strange rodents said to burrow into graves and eat the corpses.

They are first mentioned by the Reverend Walter Gregor in *Notes on the Folk-lore of North East Scotland*, published in 1881. He spoke of 'a mysterious dreaded sort of animal, called the "yird swine" ... believed to live in graveyards, burrowing among the dead bodies and devouring them'. Yard swine is an alternative name for these creatures, which are said to make pig-like noises.

In the archives of the Department of Natural History of the Natural Museums of Scotland is a letter written by A. Smith, Rayne School, Wartle, Aberdeenshire, dated December 11, 1917, to James Ritchie in Edinburgh, which relates how the father of one Archibald Gardener at Warthill, remembered his father 'turning up one earth hound in its nest' while ploughing a field at Deveron about 50 years previously.

He writes: 'Archibald saw this one himself, has quite a distinct recollection of it, and says all the neighbours were interested to see it, and all agreed it was an earth-hound from its appearance, though it did not transpire whether any of them were acquainted with the ●



**'AN ARMED POSSE
MANAGED TO KILL
IT - IT WAS SAID TO
HAVE BITTEN OFF
THE LEG OF ONE
OF THE MEN IN ITS
DEATH THROES.'**



COWROW: A huge, savage
reptilian monster said to
 lurk beneath the Ozarks in
 Arkansas.  Simon Wyatt

'A REPUGNANT WORM-LIKE MONSTER EXPLODED FROM THE EARTH AND GRABBED A CAT. THE UNFORTUNATE MOGGIE WAS SWALLOWED BY ITS SLOBBERING MAW.'



MINHOCAO: IN 1884, a worm-like creature resembling the Minhocao of South America was reported from Texas. © Simon Wyatt

animal before ... He describes it as being something between a rat and a weasel, and about the size of a ferret, head like that of a dog, and I think he said the tail was very long. At a casual glance it would be mistaken for a rat, but was quite unlike on close examination.'

Another earth hound was killed around 1915 near Mastrick, close to a churchyard, after being turned up by a plough. It was somewhat like a dark rat in size and colour, but had mole-like feet, a tail only about half as long as a rat's, a long head somewhat similar to a guinea-pig's, noticeable white 'tusks' (probably the animal's incisors) and pig-like nostrils.

These strange beasts may still be around today. In 1990 Alexander Fenton was told by a friend from the town of Keith that the creatures still existed: 'They're between a rat and a rabbit. They live in graveyards. They howk doon an cleek intae the coffins.'

In Islamic lore there is a race of sub-human creatures renowned for digging into graves and tombs and feasting on the human cadavers therein - they are the *ghul*, from which we derive the word ghoul. In Arabic *ghul* means 'to seize', a reference to their grave-robbing habits.

More recently, creatures recalling ghouls and earth hounds have been reported in Kentucky. Investigator B M Nunnelly has interviewed a number of witnesses, who report encounters with white, furry, two-legged creatures which apparently burrow into graveyards, although what they might be or where they come from is a mystery (and a worthy subject for a separate article).

EARTH HOUND: This unidentified rat-like creature is among the UK's most mysterious crypto-beasts. Is it possible the Earth Hound is an undiscovered, carrion-eating species of rodent or weasel, rather than merely an odd item of Scottish folklore? © Simon Wyatt

Finally, we must turn our attention to the many stories of cave-dwelling humanoids that may have inspired worldwide legends of trolls, gnomes and the like.

On the Indonesian Island of Flores, the Nage people speak of a race of dwarfish, hairy, upright-walking, foul-smelling creatures with ape-like faces which they call the *Ebu gogo*, or 'grandparent that eats everything'. The *Ebu gogo* lived in a mountain cave but would venture forth at night to steal vegetables from the Nages' fields. They were also said to kill livestock with bamboo spears.

Sick of this behaviour, the Nage people formed a plot. They held a great feast and invited the creatures to attend. After they returned to their caves, drunk on liquor, the Nage tossed in 500 bales of palm fibre, which they set light to before sealing up the cave mouth. The *Ebu gogo* were killed in the fire and several days afterwards a carpet of maggots emerged from the cave and spread for half a mile. This was supposed to have happened in the early part of the 19th century.

In other parts of Flores and on neighbouring islands there are similar stories of cave-dwelling beings destroyed by fire. The tales might have been dismissed as myths if it were not for the discovery in 2003 of the sub-fossil remains of an extraordinary new species of hominid in limestone caves on Flores. *Homo florensis* was a little over 3 feet tall with an ape-like brow and are believed to have been wiped out in a volcanic eruption around 12,000 years ago. However, it is possible they survived elsewhere



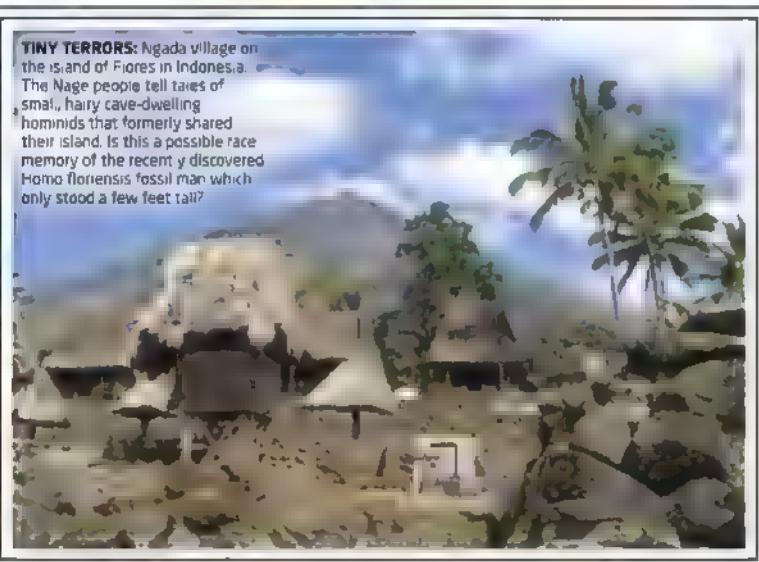
"A MYSTERIOUS DREADED SORT OF ANIMAL BELIEVED TO LIVE IN GRAVEYARDS, BURROWING AMONG THE DEAD BODIES AND DEVOURING THEM."

on Flores and there are intriguing sightings of similar beings from remote parts of the island as recently as the year 2000.

Other hominids may be behind stories of cave-dwelling monsters. Danish cryptozoologist Dr Lars Thomas recently came upon accounts of an old Danish king who loved to hunt trolls. The trolls are described as being 7-feet tall, man-like, hairy, powerfully built with protruding brows and ape-like mouths. The females had pendulous breasts. The description exactly matches those I had heard first-hand from witnesses of the *almasty*, the Russian Wildman, during the Centre for Fortean Zoology expedition to the Caucasus Mountains in 2008 (see *Paranormal Magazine* issue 32). I heard several stories of the *almasty* living in caves.

New cave systems with new species of animal are frequently being discovered. We already know that there are blind salamanders and cave fish, huge whip scorpions and massive cave centipedes lurking in the world's caverns. It makes you wonder what else is creeping around beneath our feet. ●

TINY TERRORS: Ngada village on the island of Flores in Indonesia. The Nage people tell tales of small, hairy cave-dwelling hominids that formerly shared their island. Is this a possible race memory of the recently discovered *Homo florensis* 'fossil man' which only stood a few feet tall?



Previous reprints in *Unearthed* have focused on magic and sorcery in far-off exotic locations. But Britain too had its practitioners of magic: 'cunning men' and 'wise women' who were held in high regard in their communities and resorted to for cures, potions and help beyond the ordinary. Arthur Morrison, an important writer of the 19th century with a great social conscience, learnt of a recently departed cunning man, perhaps the last in England, while on holiday in Essex. He took note of the locals' anecdotes of 'Cunning Murrell' and wrote a novel based upon him. Then, some years later, in 1900, he returned to Murrell's home village to learn more about this fascinating man - and was thrilled to be led to a chest, unopened since his death, which contained all his magical books and manuscripts. Morrison's article on the discovery, originally published in the October 1900 edition of *The Strand Magazine*, is reprinted here (with a few edits).



A Wizard of Yesterday

I HAVE MADE MANY HOLIDAYS in remote parts of Essex, where, ten years ago [ie 1890], places and people were still in the 18th century as regards aspect, costume, habits, and modes of thought. One of these places was Hadleigh, where, making a sketching excursion with my friend, Mr J. L. Wimbrush, the painter, who illustrates this article, we came on the tales and relics of the wizard, Cunning Murrell.

Witches, an old lady told us, were to exist in Leigh for a hundred years, but in Hadleigh there were to be three for ever, and in Canewdon as many as nine; and thus was the prophecy of Cunning Murrell.

James Murrell died in Hadleigh in 1860. At different times he had followed the more common trades of shoemaker, surveyor, and chemist's still man; but the most of his life was given to astrology, quack doctoring, exorcism, veterinary surgery, and the casting out of devils. He was the seventh son of a seventh son, he cured with charms, he divined the lurking places of lost property, he laid spells upon thieves until they restored their plunder.

By the tales we heard there never was such a mighty magician before, out of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. He was miraculously transported from place to place in the night.

'Never was such a mighty magician before ... he could do anything, cure anything, and know anything and it was his daily boast that he was the devil's master.'



He made a wonderful glass wherewith a man might see through a brick wall; he could do anything, cure anything, and know anything, past, present, or future, and it was his daily boast that he was the devil's master. In short, he was a white man-witch, and his powers many living men and women still testified to through all Essex.

THE WIZARD'S HOME

The Castle Inn was at that time kept by a Mr Cracknell, a very intelligent and obliging landlord, who I am sorry to say has now been dead for some years, like too many more of my old Essex friends. He remembered Murrell well when he - Cracknell - was a boy, and he pointed out to us, among other things, the cottage which the cunning man had occupied. It was an ordinary, clapboarded two-floored little cottage, one of a row of half-a-dozen or so, and it was in the little room into which the front door opened,

now bright and clean and comfortable, that the wizard had received his clients and pursued his works, amid walls hung about thick with the herbs that he was always gathering.

The tenants, charming old people near the nineties, knew and believed in the wizard wholly. They told us of his marvellous cures, his amazing recoveries of linen stolen from



STEPHEN CHOPPEN, WHO

hedges, his surprising prophecies by aid of the stars, and his triumphant overthrowal of the wicked designs of witches. For Cunning Murrell, they would have us know, was a white and lawful wizard, who warred against the powers of darkness with all his might, and it was no sin to employ the arts of a man like him. They told us, moreover, of the famous case of Sarah Mott, a young woman so devil-possessed and afflicted by witchcraft that she ran round tables without being able to stop, and walked about on the ceiling head downwards, like a bluebottle, till Cunning Murrell destroyed the witch's power over her and drove out the demon that possessed her.

And, again, they told us of

the iron witch-bottles made for Murrell by Choppen the smith, in which were placed blood, water, finger-nails, hair, and pins; which bottles, when screwed up air-tight, were set on the fire by way of process against witches, and frequently burst with great success and devastation, thus signalizing the destruction of the diabolical influence. How he prophesied that a descendant should arise endowed with his own mystic powers, and how his son still lived and worked on a farm at Thundersley, a peaceful and ignorant labourer, though he still owned many of his father's books and instruments. It seemed that an interesting find might be before us in the way of books and records.

'She ran round tables without being able to stop, and walked about on the ceiling head downwards, like a bluebottle, till Cunning Murrell drove out the demon that possessed her.'

On our way to discover the wizard's son we called on Mr Stephen Choppen, the smith who had made the witch-bottles. He was long retired from the smithy, and was living in his own little house on the village outskirts. Steve Choppen had no witch-bottle to show us, for the last had been exploded long ago, but he had the cunning man's spectacles - a quaint and clumsy instrument, with circular glasses and ponderously thick iron rims. The narrowness of the space between the sides showed the wizard's head to have been a small one, and, indeed, he was an extremely small man in every way, by the descriptions of a dozen people.

THE WIZARD'S FRIEND

Steve Choppen had his anecdotes, also, told with a terse humour of his own. He was not a superstitious man, but he admitted that the first of the witches-bottles gave him trouble in the forging, for which he could not account. The iron wholly refused to be welded - till Cunning Murrell arrived and blew the fire, when all went well. So much for the first of the bottles. The last vanished in a way that Steve Choppen described somewhat thus:

'Old Buck Murrell - that's the son you're going to see; his name's Edward, but everyone calls him Buck - though he can't as much as read, after his father died he got an idea to do a bit o' hocus-pocus on his own account just to keep up the family reputation. So he finds a chap as suspects a witch an' he gets the last o' the bottles the old man had left, an' he makes it ready and fills it up just as his father used to do. "You mustn't speak a word," says the chap, "else you'll spoil the charm," an' with that he shoves the bottle on the fire. ◎



'Now this bottle must ha' been one o' my best, an' it holds the bilin' stuff an' steam in for a long time, they two a-sittin' either side the grate a-waitin'. Presently the other chap gets impatient, and says he, "I don't believe this here bottle's a good 'un'. "Danged!" shouts Buck, "you've spiled the charm!"

'An' at that "BANG!" goes the bottle, an' bundles the pair on 'em over neck an' crop on the floor, down comes all the pots an' kettles with a run an' when they gets enough sense in 'em to look round they finds the whole chimney-breast blowed up, mantelpiece, grate an' all, an' old Buck Murrell, he aren't been in the witchcraft line since.'

The bottle that ended in this ignominious devastation nevertheless had provided, soon after its making, a striking example of the overpowering influence of superstitious fear. Soon after it had cooled, Steve Choppen and some of his friends disrespectfully christened it in beer. One after another took a pull from it, till it came to the turn of the bellows-boy. When he had drunk, some wag began

solemnly to 'chaff' the lad, and the others took it up.

'Nobody wouldn't give much for your chance o'bein' an old man, Jim,' they said; 'a helpin' to make the thing first, an now a-drinking bewitched beer out of it.'

It was an empty enough piece if chaff, lightly enough said, but it is a fact that it terrified the wretched boy, who never went home, sickened, and never came to the smithy; for in a little while he died.

THE WIZARD'S SON

In Mr. Cracknell's trap we drove to Thundersley to find Buck Murrell, and there, after something of a hunt, we sighted him at last, working in a field. He was a short, sturdy old fellow, with a shock head of loose, white hair, and nothing about him to betoken so near relationship to the formidable mystic who held a country in awe for a long lifetime.

He was not a bit haughty, moreover; on the contrary, a hint of a pint of 'mild' brought him away from his work with a great alacrity, and soon Buck Murrell was the most important person in Thundersley, surrounded by admiring friends, and waxing

eloquent on the exploits of his father. He defied us, or anybody else, to name anything that his father couldn't do - anything in the whole universe.

'My father, genelmaen, knowed moe'n any o' the doctors an' parsons in England. There warn't a witch as could stand him, where-ever he went. Books, sir - why, bless you, I've got books as nobody couldn't read - nobody but my father. Often they've tried - doctors an' genelman as claims to read anythin' - but no. Herbs, sir? Ay, my father knowed every herb as growed. Herbs? Ah, that he did.'

'He cured 'em, Buck, den't he?' observed an admirer. 'Ague and rheumatiz an'such, down in t'marshes, eh?'

'Cured 'em? Ay, there warn't nothin' as my father couldn't cure - just as you might be a-sittin' there, sir. There was a Mr. Bird-he come to my father paralyzed an' eat up wi' scurvy. My father he says summat or does summat, an' Mr Bird he stands up as healthy as me, an' gets a hossback to ride home.

'Mr Bird, sir, he puts down ten pound on the table - ten gold suvrens on the spot, genelmen. So says my father, "No," says he, "it aren't cost me nothin', sir, an' it sha'n't cost you!" But says Mr Bird, "Take it, Mr. Murr'il, I sha'n't touch it agen," says he, "an' if you don't take it it'll be lost" - an' out he goes.'

And Buck Murrell applied himself again to his mug.

Many queer reminiscences were pumped out of the depth of the old man's memory by the united force of the assembled company - strangely mingled anecdotes of the cunning man; totally impossible myths being mingled with narratives of the simplest and most natural performances - all seeming equally wonderful in the eyes of the simple rustics.

How he had astounded the village constable (who had received a tremendous 'turn' on suddenly coming upon the wise man standing ghost-like in a field studying the heavens) by naming a star and pointing it out, catalogued in a book.

All about the wonderful glass with which one could see through a brick wall, which glass

"My father, genelmaen, knowed moe'n any o' the doctors an' parsons in England. Why, bless you, I've got books as nobody couldn't read - nobody but my father."



'It was not witchcraft, but astrology. A great mass of observations and notes on almost every possible combination of the planets.'

When at last the old wooden chest stood in the parlour of the Castle Inn, Buck Murrell unlocked it with a hushed and awful respect. All that was in this chest and other things as well had been circumspectly buried in the back garden of the cottage, after the cunning man's death, by his landlord. After this complete interment, the landlord, confident of having done a public service in putting out of the way for ever all the devilish and mischievous machinery of the departed wizard, went home, and Buck Murrell dug everything up again, and here most of it was.

The lid was lifted and set back. Within was the most confused jumble of dusty, heaped-up books and papers that mind's eye can picture; a jumble that the old man regarded with as much awe as pride.

There were many books of astronomy, and tables of ascensions; many old medical books and botanical and anatomical plates; a Bible and a prayer book; *New Tables of the Motions of the Planets*, 1728; many more such books, all adorned with numerous manuscript notes; and on the fly-eaves of *Hackett's Astronomy* Cunning Murrell had worked out the times of eclipse of the sun to the year 1912.

In the books of medical and herbal recipes Murrell had made a very large number of additions and alterations. Nicholas Culpepper's knowledge and authority were freely challenged, and his statements as to quantity and preparation corrected, in the wizard's small and crabbed handwriting. Particular care had been taken in all these books to indicate exactly at what hour and on what day various herbs were to be gathered and at what time prepared.

The old gentleman also evidently had the courage of his opinions in matters of astrology,

for numerous copies of *Raphael's Almanac*, dated between 1806 and 1850, were scrawled over and corrected in matters of prediction.

But the main interest of the whole collection lay in the manuscripts. Of these the first and chief were certain unbound homemade books, dealing with conjurations, astrology, and geomancy. The largest of these was a good-sized quarto of about 50 pages with the title, *The Book of Magic and Conjurations*. The book set out with a particularization of the various angels of the planets and their functions on different days. Then many pages were devoted to a setting forth in straggling diagrams of the sigils, spirits, intelligences, seals, and characters of the planets, with sacred pentacles and other cabalistic signs.

Accompanying these were

notes directing how the figures

should be employed as talismans

and amulets, and upon what

metals they must be engraved.

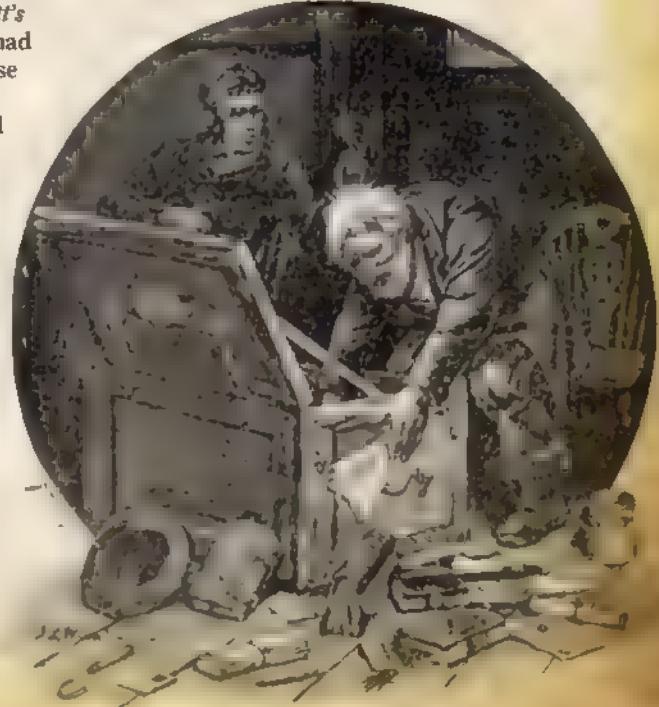
The rest of the book was a

recital of the conjurations to be

used in different circumstances

and on different days. Here is

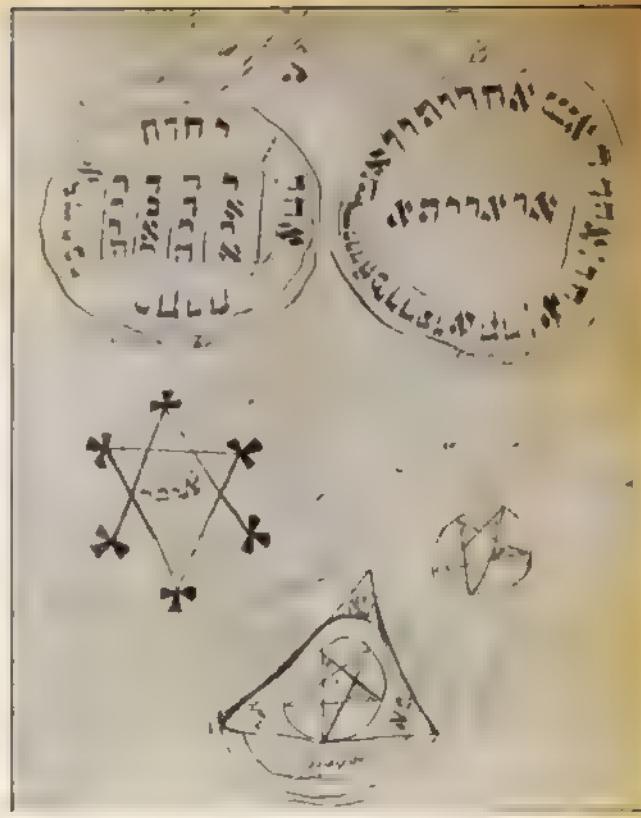
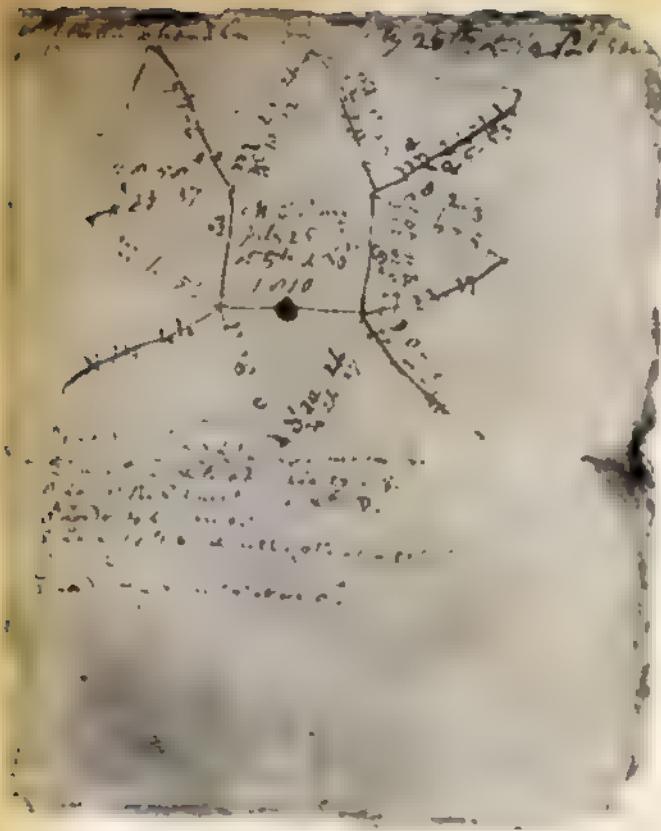
the general ◎



his father had enjoined Buck to keep, but to obtain which some gentleman curiously inclined had basely tempted him with half a sovereign - successfully; and how this same gentleman afterwards met poetic justice by swallowing another half-sovereign, which killed him. This glass, by the way, had once been the subject of a private examination and taking apart at the hands of Steve Choppen, who informed me that it was nothing but a clumsily home-made arrangement of bits of looking-glass, such as might once have been bought at a toy-shop.

THE WIZARD'S PAPERS

We brought the talk round to the matter of the present whereabouts of the books and papers, and it turned out, at last, that they were all in a chest, which chest was in a former lodging of Buck Murrell's at Hadleigh. And so we all went back to Mr Cracknell's trap, to redeem the chest by payment of the debt that kept it from its owner.



'Mighty powers were called upon to "dispel all wicked enchantments and spells, and scatter them like chaff and dust and feathers before the wind".'

'conjuration of Wednesday', exactly as written and spelt:

'I conjure and call upon you ye Strong and Holy Angels Good and Powerfull in a strong Name of Fear and Praise, Ja, Adonay, Elohim, Saday, Saday; Eie, Eie, Eie; Asamie, Asamie; and in the Name of Adonay the God of Israel who hath made the two great Lights and Distinguished Day from Night for the benefit of his creatures and by the names of all the Discerning Angels Governing Openly in the Second House, before the great angel Tetra, Strong and Powerfull, and by the name of his star which is called Mercury and by the name of his Seal which is that of a Powerfull and honoured God; and I call upon thee Raphael and by the names (above mentioned) thou Great Angel who presidest over the Fourth day and by the Holy Name which is written in the front of Aaron created the Most High Priest and by the names of all the Angels who are constant in the Grace of Christ and by the name of Ammalium

that you assist me in my labours.'

Two other of these manuscript books were something of a large duodecimo in size, but much thicker than the book of magic and conjurations. When I opened the first of these, Buck Murrell, doubtless recognising an old friend, said: 'Now, there's a book, sir - that's a bit beyond ye, I'll bet. Doctors can't read he, nor nobody. That's witchcraft, sir, that book!'

It was not witchcraft, but astrology. A great mass of observations and notes on almost every possible combination of the planets, all in the familiar crabbed hand-writing, with here and there a horoscope in diagram.

The other small book was one of geomancy. This was the art which Murrell used to find lost property and coerce thieves into restitution. A great deal was claimed for this system of divination - so much, in fact, as to make one wonder that the wise man had any necessity for astrology. It would 'resolve any question or doubt whatsoever'; it would 'tell truth from falsehood

and the place of anything'.

The system was a complicated and obscure one. The names of the persons seeking information, of the articles lost, and of any other chief element in the 'doubt or question', were written out, and various numerical values were manipulated until a symmetrical little group of noughts and crosses was evolved, and the shape, number, and disposition of these noughts and crosses conveyed to the eye of the seer the solution of the difficulty. The noughts seemed to convey the good and the crosses the bad auguries.

Among the immense heap of odd letters and scraps of paper there must have been hundreds of slips used for the geomantic process. One side of a piece of paper would be covered with strokes in groups of from two to six, each group being terminated by a dot, these strokes expressing the values of the letters in the question, and the whole being concluded by the result. Then there would follow, probably on the other side of the paper, an elaborate form of conjuration, calling upon all the angels of the day to afflict the thief (should it be a case of a thief) with miscellaneous discomforts until the plunder were restored.

THE WIZARD'S CRAFT

Many other scraps, again, contained exorcisms and conjurations. Among them I came upon the 'whole bag of tricks' employed in the case of Sarah Mott, as to whose bewitching and subsequent relief from evil influence I had heard from an old lady in the district.

First there was an immensely long conjuration calling upon the great Tetragrammaton and the whole host of Heaven to 'drive out from Sarah Mott all evil spirits in the service of the Devil and to punish the witch who had put the harm upon her, but ten thousand times more to scarily and torture all the spirits of evil in bitterness of Great Wrath'. The end of all this, apparently, having been satisfactory, an amulet was next provided for her subsequent protection, and on still another piece of paper appeared the 'charm and conjuration to bless' this amulet, and 'to prevent all evil spirits that have power to hurt said Sarah Mott, whether directed by Sarah Dropty or any other witch or wizard'.

Marian Tretford's, too, had 'tormented and bedevilled and bewitched and laid devilish powers on Benjamin Brown', wherefore mighty powers were called upon to 'dispel all wicked enchantments and spells, and scatter them like chaff and dust and feathers before the wind'.

Then there were conjurations for any number of other purposes. George Abrams had promised to marry Susannah Sewell and failed of his pledge. Whereupon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were adjured to bring the said George Abrams back, and allow him no peace on earth till he should marry said Susannah Sewell.

Cunning Murrell kept little bits of private information too, in this chest. Any particulars of the life or circumstances of anybody whatsoever which came to his ears were carefully noted down, and then, should it ever chance that this person or any of his connections come from cunning advice, Mr. Murrell could startle his client with his knowledge, and secure another undoubting disciple.

Then the letters! Never was raked together such a heap of

superstition, credulity, anxiety, and a touching faith. Who would expect to see among the correspondence of a 'wise man' in a dark corner of Essex many letters from an educated woman living in Eaton Square, asking for astrological predictions, charms for sickness, and the fate of lost articles? Yet here they were. And after all, Cunning Murrell probably came cheaper than a Bond Street Palmist or clairvoyant of today.

Marvellous faith in Murrell's healing powers was testified by long sequences of letters from all parts, often reporting either no change in the patient or one for the worse, yet breathing no syllable of doubt, but praying for more charms, more herbs, more spells, more anything to save the sick and dying.

Many were the quaintness in the various letters. 'I have took the powder it made me verrey

Cunning Murrell played as upon a dulcimer, the requests of farmers to destroy the bedevilment which was upon their cows and crops - all would defy enumeration within reasonable limits.

A phial or two of some sort of powder and one or two queer little instruments, the use of whereof no man knows, were all else in the box beside the papers and books.

THE WIZARD'S DEATH

We closed the chest and turned to Buck - the simple heir to all the glamour and mystery, to a certain amount of the awe. There he sat, good simple soul, with his pipe and his mug of ale, and his shock head of white hair, placidly happy in the importance of his redoubtable father, and proud in the interest shown in him so long after his death.

Buck Murrell told us of this death, and still with pride. On his deathbed his father held learned

'Another letter was from someone who reported that the devils had not yet been driven out of the house, and there was still so heavy a smell of sulphur that all the windows had to be left open.'

queer in the stummuk pleas send sum more,' said somebody, and another letter ran: 'Mr Murls I have rote these few lines to ask you if you can tell us weather there is aney mony or Not hid in my fathers garden he is bin ded 4 years name william dice of mayland pleas say how much and what to pay you.'

Another letter, with a superscription to the postman - 'haste haste with all speed', was from someone who reported that the devils had not yet been driven out of the house, and there was still so heavy a smell and smoke of sulphur that all the windows had to be left open.

But to describe or even to catalogue half the queer notes and scraps in this old chest would fill a small book. The odd recipes, the memoranda of the character, ages, and circumstances of all kinds of people, the letters, inclosing 'some more hair and fingernails', the entreaties of the true lovers upon whose feelings

disputations with the Reverend John Godson, the curate, and maintained the reality of his mystic powers to the last. He triumphed over spiritual advises with Talmudic and cabalistic questions, and to his daughter he prophesied the moment of his death precisely, a day and a few hours before it came to pass.

There at the east side of the little Norman church of Hadleigh Cunning Murrell lay, with 20 of his children about him, and Buck Murrell showed us the place; for it was marked by no stone - not even by the humblest wooden memorial. Even the mounds had sunk, and nothing but a brighter green in the turf marked the place of each grave. And now I believe not even that remains.

'You know now about my father, sir,' said Buck Murrell. 'Remember, sir, he were a good man - enemy to all witched, an' the devils master. He never put on - he took off. Remember that, sir.'

I have tried to remember it well. ●



SCARES IN AYRSHIRE

Author of *Scottish Ghosts* and *Legendary Ayrshire*, **DANE LOVE**, takes us on a tour round the historic and very haunted 'Land of Burns' in western Scotland.



SCOTLAND'S POET, ROBERT BURNS (1759-96), was a great lover of the paranormal, and he often referred to various spirits and ghosts in his works. Probably his greatest poem, *Tam o' Shanter*, talks about the witches dancing in the churchyard at Alloway, just along the road from where he was born, a place where 'ghaists and howlets nightly crie'. The land of Burns, as Ayrshire is often called, is a haunted county, and there are innumerable places that have tales of hauntings associated with them. Many of these are old stories, ones that have been handed down for centuries, whereas others are more

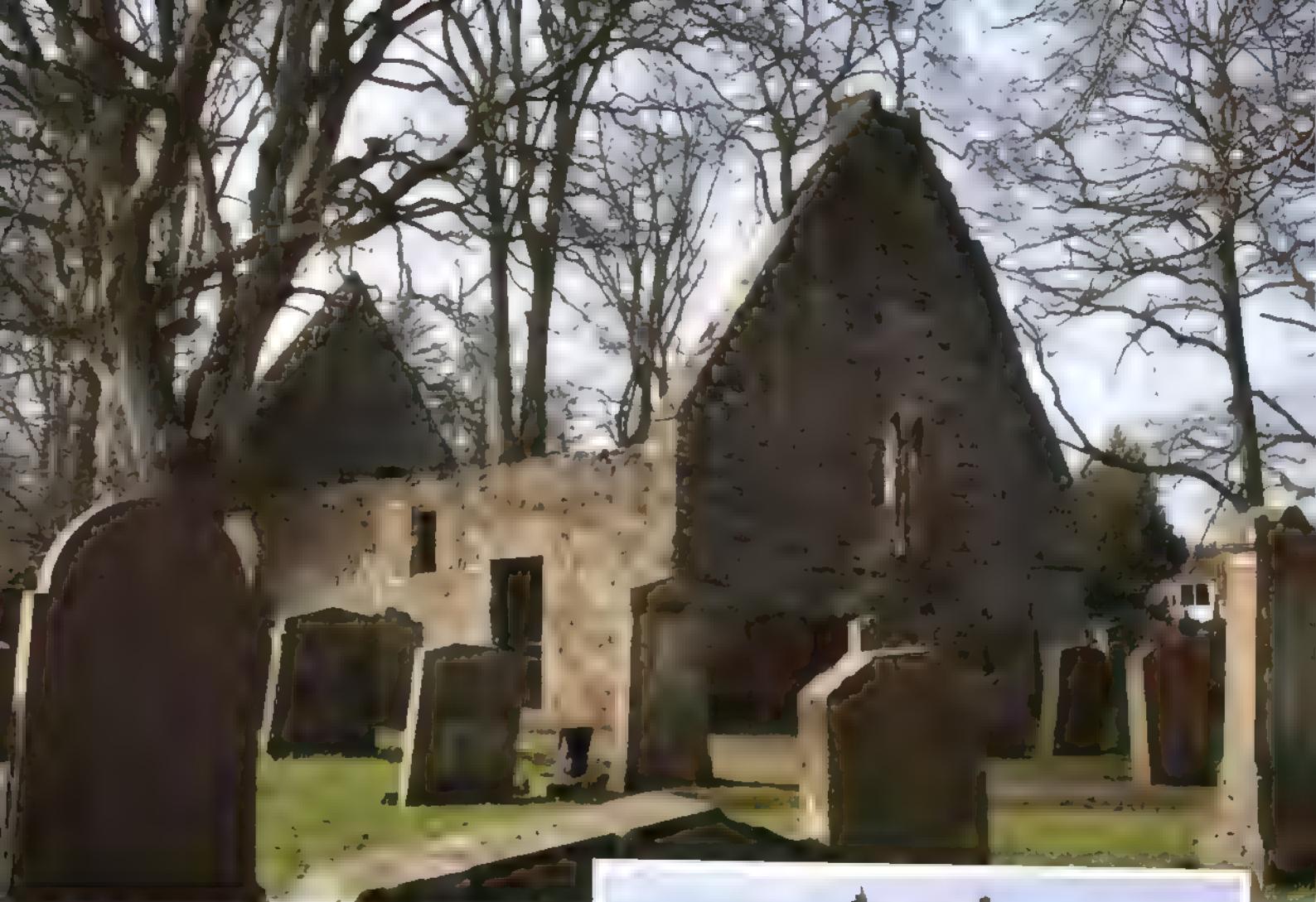
recent encounters, experienced by people who are still alive.

There are dozens of old castles across Ayrshire, almost all of which are said to be haunted in some way. One of the more famous is Culzean Castle, which has numerous ghost stories associated with it. The castle, which is owned by the National Trust for Scotland, stands on a cliff above the sea, and within the cliffs are a number of caves and tunnels. Tradition claims that a piper walked into the tunnel playing the bagpipes, people on the ground above following the route by listening to the sound. However, the skirl of the pipes suddenly stopped

and the piper was never seen alive again. The ghostly sound of his bagpipes can sometimes still be heard, especially around the drive on the estate known as Piper's Brae.

Dean Castle in Kilmarnock is another fine tower that is regularly open to the public. The owner of the castle at one time was the Jacobite Earl of Kilmarnock, who was executed for his part in the rising. Prior to following Bonnie Prince Charlie, the servants at Dean Castle were to experience a number of ghostly sightings. They witnessed a ghostly head, not unlike Lord Kilmarnock's, rolling about the floor. When Lord Kilmarnock was about to be executed he requested ●

HISTORY AND MYSTERY:
Ayrshire is a beautiful county distinguished by wild coastline and romantic ruins, including the remains of Dunoon Castle, seen at the left of the photograph.



CREepy KIRK: Robert Burns's famous poem Tam O'Shanter tells of witches and ghosts in the graveyard at Old Alloway Kirk



'THERE ARE DOZENS OF OLD CASTLES ACROSS AYRSHIRE, ALMOST ALL OF WHICH ARE SAID TO BE HAUNTED IN SOME WAY.'

that a basket be used to catch his head, for he couldn't bear to think of it lolling around on the floor just as the servants had told him.

Other castles in the county have ghostly tales of their own. The ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots, who is known to have passed through the county on a number



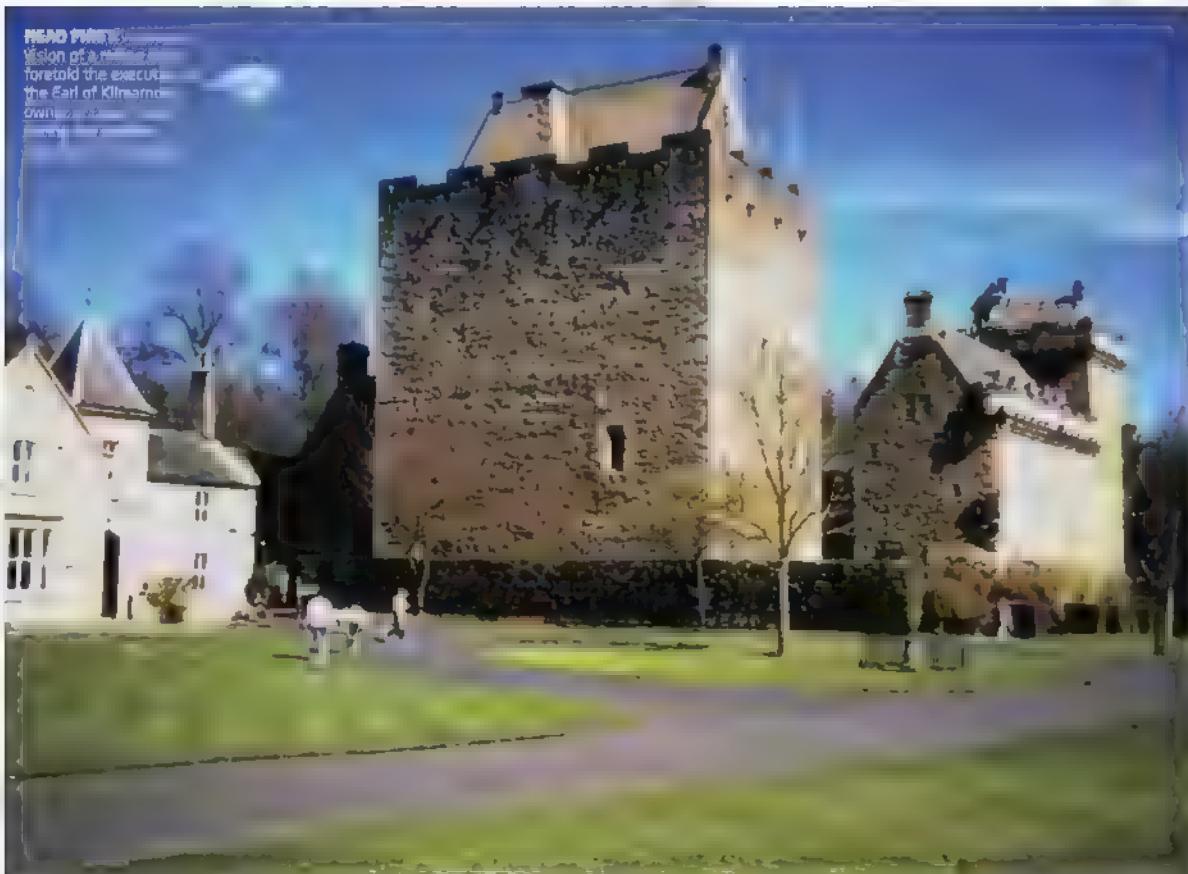
At Cessnock Castle, the best known of which involves a piper lost forever in the woods which now surround the rock formation, a mournful piping can still be heard at dusk. Love

of occasions, has been witnessed in several places. At Cessnock Castle, the faint image of the queen has been seen in the old tower. Cessnock has a number of ghosts, including apparitions of Rev John Know, Scotland's great reformer, and the poet Burns himself.

The great Scots freedom-fighter, Sir William Wallace, has many Ayrshire connections. There are the strange tales of how his sword magically appeared on a large boulder where he had rested it, still to be seen to this day, or of where his heel marked a large natural rock by the side of the River Ayr

whilst he was making one of his many escapes from the English. The mark, known as Wallace's Heel, has had natural spring water issuing from it to this day.

At Ardrossan Castle, in the coastal town of the same name, Wallace is said to have tricked the English enemy, who occupied the castle at the time, and thus was able to attack the defences and kill most of the occupants. The bodies were dumped in a vaulted cellar, known as Wallace's Larder ever since. Surprisingly, it is not the spirits of the English soldiers who have been seen at Ardrossan



HEAD PINTED
Vision of a
ghost
foretold the execution
of the Earl of Kilmarnock
in 1679



Dane Love is the author of numerous books on Scottish subjects, and on Ayrshire in particular. He has written *Scottish Ghosts*, which has recently been republished by Amberley Books; *Scottish Spectres*; and *Legendary Ayrshire* plus 20 other titles. An authority on the history of the Covenanters, Dane lives in the Ayrshire countryside in a house that the locals – if not the author himself – claim is haunted. He is married with two children.

but the ghost of Wallace himself, often witnessed on stormy nights.

Carleton Castle stands in ruins on a low hillside above the coastal village of Lendalfoot. For centuries a seat of the Cathcart family, at one time Sir John Cathcart lived here. He had a number of wives, each one an heiress or else coming with a substantial dowry, but not too long after the wedding they were to die in mysterious circumstances. At length, one feisty bride, May Culzean, turned the tables on Cathcart, for when he tried to push her over the cliffs on the Carrick shore, she managed to knock him over instead. At the rocky cliff Cathcart's screams are sometimes

heard, and at the castle the sound of his fall and deathly screams have been reported in the past.

stands in ruins within the country park. They were surprised to spot the figure of a man at one

'THEY WERE SURPRISED TO SPOT THE FIGURE OF A MAN AT ONE OF THE WINDOW OPENINGS HIGH UP ON THE TOWER. WITHIN SECONDS THEY HEARD THE STEEL GATE RATTLING AND A GHOST PURSUING THEM.'

Of more recent paranormal activity in Ayrshire's castles, one can do no better than relate the tale of the haunted billiards room at Cloncaird Castle, near Maybole. On one of the castle stairways a figure has often manifested, but stranger still is the story of the balls on the table suddenly stopping or being deflected for no apparent reason, almost as if some invisible hand is playing its own game with the participants.

In recent years walkers in Eglinton Park at Irvine looked up at the old tower of Eglinton Castle, which

of the window openings high up on the tower. The tower, which is sometimes opened to the public, is usually locked by a strong steel gate, and the walkers noticed that this was the case, so couldn't work out who was in the tower. However, within seconds they heard the steel gate rattling and a ghost pursuing them.

The haunted locations in Ayrshire are not limited to ancient castles, however. The county has a number of old inns where ghosts have been witnessed over the years. In recent years a group of spirit-finders spent some time in Poosie Nansie's Inn, in Mauchline. The pub, which was known to Robert Burns and which featured as the Jolly Beggar's howff (pub) in his works, was reckoned to be the home of 20 different spirits. ●



DYING FATE The terrified screams of the tragic Cathcart can still be heard echoing up the cliffs on Carrick shore. The most recent record of the day is 1996, when a team of spirit-finders found 20 different ghosts in Poosie Nansie's Inn, Mauchline



EMBARRASSING TIME
Strangest ghost of C onard Castle is the invisible presence that likes to knock the balls about on the billiards table when people are attempting to play

One of these was said to be a young girl. The inn had never really been aware of sightings of ghosts within it before, but the regulars had experienced poltergeist activity on occasion – for objects appeared to move by themselves and glasses were known to fall from shelves.

In nearby Cumnock the Craighead Inn is said to be haunted by the spirit of 'Marvin', who has been experienced in one of the rooms in the upper floors. The attic of the inn, which was erected in 1722, gave visitors 'weird feelings', so much so that few were keen to visit. However, at one time a sponsored nightly vigil was arranged, some regulars

'THE MAN SHOWED BILL A PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS FAMILY, WHICH INCLUDED HIS LATE MOTHER – IT WAS THE OLD LADY BILL HAD SEEN.'

spending the full night there – with no ill effects, I may add!

The Castle View Inn in Dundonald was also the subject of a paranormal research visit and again a number of spirits were recorded by the team. They had previously visited and discovered that the ancient Dundonald Castle, built on a rock above the village, was home to a number of ghosts.

Apparitions of old ladies have appeared in various locations and been witnessed by different folk. At Ballochmyle Hospital, which no longer exists, nurse Karen Thomson was working during the night shift when she experienced something that she could not explain. As she was making her way through Ward 14 towards the kitchen for her tea break she saw an old woman with long grey hair. At first she wondered who had wandered into the room, but when she looked again the old woman faded away.

'HE AWOKE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS EYES WHEN HE SAW THE GHOSTLY FIGURE OF A MAN ON A HORSE, STANDING AT THE FOOT OF HIS BED.'

The spirit had been seen many times before and was known as the Grey Lady of Ballochmyle.

Similarly, in 1982 Heather Hunter was in her kitchen in a bungalow in Ayr's Belmont Road. As she worked she became aware of a figure out of the corner of her eye, an old woman with her back to her, busily working away at a worktop. Mrs Hunter had never seen the person before, but within seconds of spotting her the figure faded away. At a later date she discovered that the old lady who formerly occupied the house looked exactly the same, and it was thought that the earthbound spirit of the woman was checking out the new occupants of her house.

Bill McKechnie lives in an old cottage on Dumfries Estate, near Cumnock. A number of years ago he had a vision of an old woman walking down through his garden and into the cottage. She was carrying a white enamel bucket and appears to have been at the well, returning with water to the cottage. He didn't think much about it until a day later when a man visited the cottage to see the place where he was born. The man showed Bill a photograph of his family, which included his late mother – it was the old lady Bill had 'seen'. The hairs on his neck rose.

Near Muirkirk in the eastern part of the county is an old building that was erected as an institute for local iron and mineworkers. In later years it was converted into an outdoor centre,



ONE OF THE REGULARS: Marvin is the name given to the ghost who haunts the Craighead Inn at Cumnock. © Dane Lowe

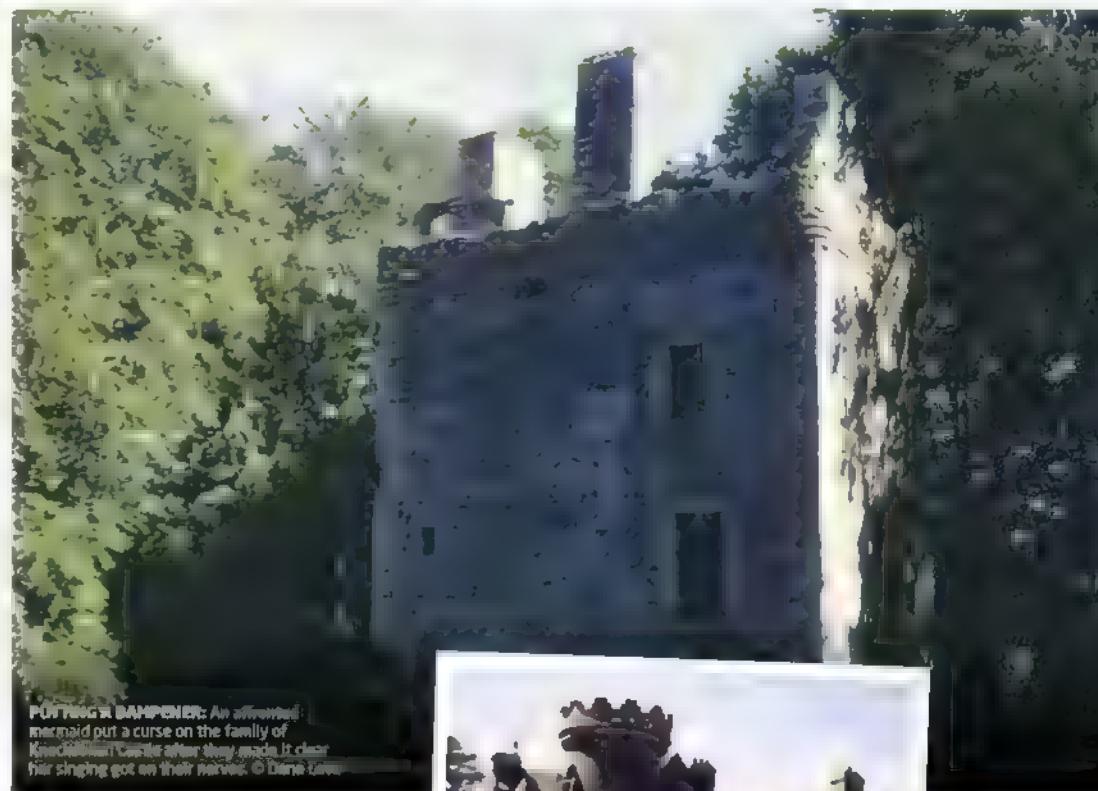


TERROR MOUNTS: A startling equestrian ghost has been reported from the former Kames Institute in Murkirk. © Dane Lowe

tower-house and sing at night. Unfortunately, this kept the young heir in his cot awake much of the night. The owner of the castle arranged to have the boulder blown up, whereupon the mermaid returned for just one more visit. One that occasion she cursed the

The old churchyard in Auchinleck at one time had a tree in it that appeared to grow horizontally. The main trunk came out of the ground as any normal tree, but then took a right-angled turn and seemed to make its way across the grass, instead of heading

'HE SUFFERED A CHOKING FIT IN FRONT OF THE CURSED PAINTING AND LATER THAT NIGHT DIED FROM A HEART ATTACK.'



PUTTING A BANISHING: An efferred mermaid put a curse on the family of Knockdolian Castle after they made it clear her singing got on their nerves. © Dane Lowe



ART ATTACK. A strange artefact can be found at Pendhill Castle - a death-dealing painting © Dane Lowe

family, telling them that 'there'll never be an heir to Knockdolian again'. The original family died out, and the castle had to pass through the female line, which it did on various occasions thereafter.

Tales of the supernatural abound in Ayrshire, and recent sightings of UFOs have occurred in various places. Robert Hart, from Cumnock, recalls the time he was standing at his front door when he witnessed a form of spacecraft hovering low across the fields from his home. The image he saw was real enough, he related to me, and it appeared for a few short seconds before it flew off at speed. Something he still cannot explain to this day, Robert is adamant that it appeared before him, but admits he has no idea what it could have been.

heavenward. Branches grew from the tree upwards, but the main growth of the tree was across the ground. Some said that the tree grew in an area of the burial ground that was used to bury victims of the plague, so whether this affected the natural growth of the tree or not, no one can be sure.

For haunted locations, Burns' home county is hard to beat, and the lover of paranormal activity will find much to whet their appetite in Ayrshire. ●

used by children from all over the west of Scotland. Gordon Sloan spent a night there, sleeping in the bottom bunk. He awoke in the middle of the night and couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the ghostly figure of a man on a horse, standing at the foot of his bed!

Unfortunately, the boy in the upper bunk moved, causing his sheets to fall over the side. When Gordon moved them away the figure had gone. He relates that the sight of a horseman at the foot of his bed didn't fright him, and today, many years later, he can still picture what he saw that strange night.

Ayrshire has many other strange tales to relate, many of them appearing in the author's *Legendary Ayrshire*. Penkill Castle near Girvan has a painting within it that is cursed. A verse on it warns everyone: 'Move not this picture, let it be, for love of those in effigy.' The curse of Penkill worked its magic as recently as the 1970s, for then a man who had worked his way into the confidence of the old lady who lived there tried to remove it, perhaps with the intention of selling it. He suffered a choking fit in front of the painting and later that night he died from a heart attack. Understandably, the painting has not been moved since.

Another castle in the county, Knockdolian, has a long-standing tale of a curse that was placed on the owners. Apparently a mermaid used to sit on a large boulder in the River Stinchar below the

experiences

Do you have a story to share? Here at *Paranormal*, we are always interested to hear of readers' true experiences of the supernatural. Email your story to: editor@paranormalmagazine.co.uk or write to: The Editor, *Paranormal Magazine*, Jazzi Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ.



I have an experience relating to your article in February's magazine about Shadow People.

I live on a fairly large housing estate built around 1982. The estate is a mix of semi and detached houses in cul-de-sacs. Each cul-de-sac is connected by roads and footpaths that wind through the houses. About 18 months ago I was walking along the footpath by my house when in front of me, about 20 feet ahead, I saw a black shape come out of a garden fence as if walking through it and disappear around the corner. This happened at 3pm in the afternoon so I wasn't scared and ran after it. I found nothing and although I kept thinking about it, soon forgot about the incident until a few months ago.

I was standing outside the front of my house having a quiet cigarette and saw, maybe two or three times, this same black shadow flitting around the cul-de-sac but always in the same place. This time it was dark and although we have two streetlights close by, I didn't attempt to investigate.

Now I see it most evenings. It appears to have a human form, but a human wearing a cloak or something that covers its head down to the ground, which makes it impossible to identify if it's male

or female. I'm curious to find out why it's always in the same place, moving from one spot to another as if time's replaying somehow, yet I don't get a spirit feel from it as if it's a ghost or classic haunting.

I've been on paranormal investigations in the past and have encountered spirit activity on investigations, but this feels different to anything I've encountered before.

By the way, I love reading your magazine. Keep up the good work!

Alison, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

there any strange aroma.

We eventually managed to get her away from there, and it never happened again. Tina is sadly no longer with us and the manager has moved to his own pub.

Brian Winnard, via email

My family and I live in a house with a rich history when it comes to paranormal goings on but what happened last night has puzzled me greatly and now I can't get it out of my head!

My husband and I were watching TV and from where we were sitting we have a clear view into the kitchen. All of a sudden I was aware of a bright flash of green from the corner of my eye. Both my husband and I both looked into the kitchen and there on the wall was quite a large mass of bright green swirling lights!

It was only there for maybe five seconds then just blinked out but it left us stunned. I haven't heard of anything like this before and the only thing remotely like it I could find on the internet was Faerie Fire...

I would be most grateful if *Paranormal Magazine* readers could offer up an explanation as to what this might have been?

Leanne Graham, via email

On December 3, 2009, I arrived home from work at 2.45 am and the first thing I did was to put the dog out in the back garden. I then switched on Sky News and made a coffee. Just after 3am, I was stood at the back kitchen door drinking my coffee and watching my dog sniff around the garden when I spotted a strange light.

It was a very bright whitish/orangish/reddish object and appeared to be a jagged triangular shape. The object was almost directly above my house and it is difficult to say how high up in the sky it was; it appeared to be several hundred feet from the ground but it could have been a lot further away. I am pretty sure that what I was seeing was the bottom/stomach of the object. It was completely silent and I could not see any movement, it seemed to be completely still.

RESPONSES

At times the object appeared to look like it was on fire and I am pretty sure that I saw what looked like smoke or steam around the object. The light appeared to the naked eye to be roughly the size of a 5-pence piece held at arms length. I stood and observed the brightly lit object for about 45 seconds before I went inside and got my mobile phone. I took 7 still photos in total, 2 normal and 5 at full zoom (5x digital zoom). I then started to video the object on my mobile phone.

What happened next was just completely mind-boggling and quite a spectacle. After filming the light for about 30 seconds, suddenly a smaller circular-shaped light, greenish/white in appearance, appeared from nowhere. I stood and observed the second object and watched as it blinked on and off several times, whilst also disappearing and re-appearing in different parts of the night sky as well as moving around the larger triangular object. I have to say, some of the manoeuvres and speed of the moving light was just simply stunning, mind-boggling and just plain weird.

After roughly 1 minute the circular light shot off in a north-westerly direction at tremendous speed and blinked out and just simply vanished. I continued to film the main object for roughly a further 30 seconds before it just went out: it was like someone switched a light off, there was an orangish/reddish flash and the thing was gone. I am pretty sure that I saw an orangish streak dart away, but this only lasted for no more than a second and unfortunately does not show up on the video clip.

I must have gone in and out of the garden about 15 times over the course of the next hour to see if I could see the thing again, but I never saw anything else and I went to bed. I have to say, at the time and after the sighting, I never really thought that much about it, I wasn't thinking UFOS, flying saucers, aliens or anything like that. It was over the following few days that it started to dawn on me just what I had seen.

I am not saying that what I witnessed was aliens, but I would love someone to show me something man-made that can perform like the objects that I witnessed, I have never seen anything remotely close. I am more than happy to share my evidence with people but I would ask that you please withhold my name since I am a professional guy and I would not like to be subject to any kind of ridicule or unwanted attention. For the same reason I do not want to give the exact location of where I live, except to say that this sighting occurred in Greater Manchester.

'G. M', Greater Manchester

EDITOR'S NOTE: You can see a selection of this gentleman's photos at www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk/experiences

While I have no wish to prolong this discussion unduly, Mark Salmon is still being economical with the truth in his response to my letter and in the interests of honesty and accuracy I hope I may respond to the points he raises.

While I am flattered that he relies so much on my books for his article, I am sure I do not need to remind him that all books contain errors and my volumes written 25 years ago are no exception but I have made it abundantly clear since then that without any shadow of a doubt Charles Dickens never belonged to any ghost club.

Unfortunately, Mr Salmon is still dealing in inaccuracies for he now says the Newsletters he refers to being stored at the British Library 'are copies of modern' Ghost Club journals but the modern Newsletters issued by the Ghost Club are certainly not stored at the British Library.

Furthermore, my website has never stated the Ghost Club Society has 'ceased to be' or 'wound up its affairs' but has always stated that the Club was reforming.

Accidents happen in the best regulated families and there is room for understanding and happiness in all ghost clubs that respect truth and honesty.

**Peter Underwood, The
Savage Club, London**

I find it astonishing to be accused of being 'economical with the truth' for referencing Mr Underwood's own work in my response. Regarding the Dickens issue, if he has proof one way or the other, I suggest he provides it to the address given below.

Again, if my honesty is being called into question, the reader can see for himself that the Ghost Club Newsletters are indeed stored in the British Library by simply searching their online catalogue. It doesn't take a minute to establish who is being 'inaccurate' here.

As for Peter Underwood's personal website, I can only say that the text is no longer as I recall it to be. The final paragraph of the relevant section is now one long sentence and one can see where the background no longer lines up.

Finally, I thank Mr Underwood for warning me that his books are unreliable source material. I won't be using them as such again.

Any further correspondence should be directed to: The Ghost Club, PO Box 910, Ipswich IP1 9PT.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All correspondence on this matter is now closed in these pages. No doubt each side will continue the exchange directly.

STAR LETTER



sent to me. If you have a moment, perhaps you would like to have a look to see what you have inspired. www.nicolakirk.wordpress.com

Whilst I am concentrating on my local and surrounding areas, a couple of paranormal investigation groups have also come forward with some of their stories and word is spreading fast - I am receiving stories from London to Milton Keynes and even one from Israel!

I wondered if you would be interested in mentioning my project in the *Paranormal Magazine* so people can see how interesting and fun it can be to get out into the community and find out what is waiting to be uncovered.

Nicola Kirk, Essex

EDITOR'S NOTE: We wish Nicola every success in her new undertaking and are happy to send her a *Paranormal Magazine* mug.

Books



Beyond Shadow World
By **Brad Steiger**
Published by **Anomalist Books**
RRP: £10 (pb)
Reviewed by **Nick Redfern**

This is the third book in a series from Anomalist Books (originally published in 2001 as *Our Shared World of the Supernatural*) and is a thought provoking and informative read.

The book focuses, to a large extent, on tales of the afterlife spirits (of the dead, and of a nature variety), ghostly beings and a variety of similar phenomena. But it is also of relevance to ufologists.

I've always found it refreshing that unlike a lot of authors who write on such matters - Brad does not try and force any particular theory or belief system down the throats of his readers. Rather, he relates the data, the theories and the ideas, and allows the reader to use this material to form his or her own opinion.

One of the things that Brad talks about in an enlightening fashion in *Beyond Shadow World* is the puzzle of the so-called Contactees: those (primarily) 1950s characters who claimed contact with long-haired aliens in out-of-the-way locations. I am often dismayed by the simplistic approach that many researchers take to the Contactee issue. For too many, things are very much black-and-white: the Contactees were telling a literal truth, or they were blatant liars.

But things aren't that clear-cut when it comes to the Contactees and Brad clearly realizes this. He has drawn parallels between those who channeled Outer Space beings and the spirit mediums who provided inspirational messages from their guides' and has come to the conclusion that the contacted intelligences exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship with the Contactees. 'In some way, they need us as much as we need them,' he states.

This is excellent stuff, and well worth the price of the book alone!

But that's not all, you will also get to learn the details of a fascinating experience Brad had as a child with one of the classic 'little people' of folklore and mythology (a brownie, an elf - the names may change but they are pretty much the same breed). It's a magical yet slightly creepy tale.

So, if your interests are chiefly in the area of the afterlife, *Beyond Shadow World* is a must-read but there's plenty to interest every reader with an interest in the shadow world.



Supernatural North
By **Darren W. Ritson**
Published by **Amberley**
RRP £12.99 pb
Reviewed by **Richard Holland**

This is a companion volume to Ritson's *Paranormal North-East* and *In Search of Ghosts*, also from Amberley. The latter details the author's many hands-on investigations, while *North-East* and *North* are more an evocation of his haunted neighbourhood, drawing on traditional tales as well as more modern ghostly encounters.

What sets *Supernatural North* aside from so many regional ghost guides is Ritson's wide experience of paranormal investigation. This adds a personal input of anecdote and insight which provides a welcome additional dimension to the retelling of the stories. And although he has cast his net wide, to include Cheshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Co Durham etc, he has visited the locations he writes about.

Another plus is the author's infectious enthusiasm for his subject. He rambles away, diving off at tangents, making comparisons or recollecting relevant incidents from his own investigations. Reading Ritson's work one is never allowed to forget that ghost-hunting is a real adventure - and a fun one at that.

Although it's packed full of information (and for that reason I lament the lack of an index), it's better not to view this as a regional guide, more a smorgasbord of spooks that just happen to be in one (broad) geographical area. *Supernatural North* is further evidence of just how gloriously ghostly England is and how much fun can be had exploring it.



Theatre



Ghost Stories
Written and directed by: **Jeremy Dyson & Andy Nyman**

Huddled together in the Everyman Playhouse, Liverpool, your eye is drawn to several numbers scrawled on the walls, suddenly your ears fill with a cacophony of sound, and a man walks onto the stage.

Written and directed by Jeremy Dyson (*League of Gentlemen*) and Andy Nyman (Derren Brown's producer), *Ghost Stories* is a tense and terrifying night at the theatre. Unfolding as a lecture from a parapsychologist (played by Nyman), we (the audience) are entered into three uncanny tales that are designed to continuously build suspense until we are ready to burst at the slightest bump in the dark.

Running for a straight 80 minutes with no interval allows for the tension to creep up over the course of the three tales perfectly. Dyson and Nyman are obviously well versed in horror as every aspect of the mise-en-scène combines, edging you further forward in your seat, so that when the payoff finally comes, it is screaming-inducing as possible.

This is not a play for the faint of heart, for it is as genuinely frightening as it is excellent. But for fans of horror if you get a chance to go along to a showing, grab it, as this is a masterful piece of the macabre with some interesting plot twists and turns.

Ghost Stories is playing in the Lyric Hammersmith from February 24 to April 3 and is likely to tour after this.

This show is unsuitable for anyone under 16 and those of a nervous disposition are advised to think seriously before attending!



Films



Zombieland
Directed by: **Ruben Fleischer**
Reviewed by: **Fergus McShane**
Price: £15.99

With the zombie sub-genre slowly teetering out now that Vampires and Werewolves are back in, *Zombieland* is surprisingly the best comedy horror since 2004's *Shaun of the Dead*.

Zombieland follows the survival of two men, Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg) and Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson), who have each found their perfect way to escape the surrounding zombie apocalypse: Columbus through a cardio regime allowing him to gently outrun any threat and Tallahassee, as he is generally 'bad-ass'!

Beyond what can be considered mandatory gore scenes for a film of this type, *Zombieland* is funny, refreshing, thrilling and oddly sentimental at times. The biggest surprise about the film is that the zombies don't really matter. They are there and serve their threatening purpose, but the likeability of the four characters mean you become invested in everyone's survival... There is no character fodder here.

Bill Murray has an unlikely cameo in the movie, which is both the best and worst part of it. The best, because Murray is at his laugh-inducing best; the worst because it brings you out of the film a little too much for too long, leaving you unprepared for the spectacular finale. But this is a small grumble in an otherwise thoroughly enjoyable film.

More than being just a good zombie film, *Zombieland* is simply a good film, something very few horrors achieve. A fun and thrilling ride from start to finish, this may be a sign that the zombie sub-genre hasn't breathed its last breath just yet.





Paranormal Activity

Directed by: Oren Peli
Reviewed by: Fergus McShane
Price: £19.99

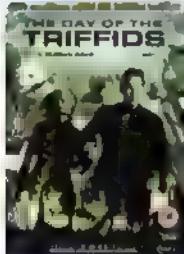
Gathering acclaim when it took the number one in the US box office charts *Paranormal Activity*'s 90 minutes of suspense and fear in a classic haunted house scenario.

With low-budget effects and a pseudo-documentary style, this fictional story shot to success after an online word-of-mouth campaign created the buzz for this genuinely frightening film to pull people in.

After moving to a new home, a couple become disturbed by a demonic presence. Wanting to get to the bottom of it, sceptical Micah sets up a camera to see what is really going on, creating a highly disturbing voyeuristic film in the process.

Voyeurism has long been a staple theme of cinema, and one that has had a strong resurgence recently in horror with the *Blair Witch*, *Cloverfield* and *[REC]* to name a small handful of quality portion. But few have used voyeuristic handheld cams in a more chilling way than seen here. We effectively glimpse into the reality of their lives at night when the darkness itself becomes as suspenseful and ominous as any sfx that may have been used instead.

You will have to go far to find a film where the potential of hidden horror is more compelling than that here. If you are of a suggestive nature this is an intense thrill-ride that will have you mesmerised. If you aren't suggestive or are a haunting sceptic, this is still an effective, engaging, downright terrifying example of modern-day horror.



The Day of the Triffids
Directed by: Nick Copus
Reviewed by: Fergus McShane
Price: £19.99

A BBC TV adaptation of the 1951 novel by John Wyndham. *The Day of the Triffids* seems to be a semi-serious, semi-tongue-in-cheek update of the classic sci-fi tale.

When 99% of the world are blinded by a flash during a meteor storm, the planet falls quickly into disarray. And with no sign of government, it falls to the megalomaniacs to take control, fighting among themselves while the true enemy gathers - the Triffids, mobile carnivorous plants set loose in the panic.

Faithful to the original novel with a few clever modernisations aside, the two-part series lacks a certain darkness that would have greatly improved it. There is very little sense of tension or foreboding, so the whole thing feels like a day out in a botanical garden terrorised by a gang of asbo teens.

Eddie Izzard is the standout performance in the piece, as Torrence, the megalomaniac who seizes power on a whim after some ludicrous plot points allow him to survive a plane crash.

The Day of the Triffids is more an invasion of TV sets than a sci-fi spectacular, so a better way to spend the time would be to revisit Wyndham's novel to get a real sense of what the story tries to achieve.



Games



BioShock 2
Format: PC 360, PS3
Developer: 2K Marin
Publisher: 2K Games
Reviewed by: Fergus McShane

When the BioShock city of Rapture was unveiled in the first instalment of this series, we were handed a tantalising new computer world to drool over and a unique and intriguing mystery to obsess over.

Now *BioShock 2*, set 10 years after the events of the first, returns us to the atmospheric halls of Rapture where you take on the role of the first 'Big Daddy' and search through the city for an unknown enemy, securing your own survival in the process.

"BioShock 2 returns to the undersea world of Rapture in this sequel to the award-winning first-person action game."

For fans of the first game, there are disappointingly not many new elements to engage with here in the short time span since *BioShock*'s release. However, with the quality of the original (winner of the 2007 Game of the Year) this is by no means a bad



thing, rather an addition to an already familiar title. The one downside to this is that for the majority of the plot to be fully understood, you will need to have played through the first game.

The one big plus in *BioShock 2* is in the story-based multiplayer mode. A prequel experience set during the fall of Rapture, this provides a shooter-based multiplayer element with seven different game modes that adds some welcome variation to *BioShock 2* in a fun and engaging way.

BioShock 2 may not be as memorable a game as its predecessor. But it has the same level of quality instilled in the gameplay and story, expanding on the creepy world of Rapture making this a must-have title.



Spooky Spirits: Puzzle Drop
Format: iPhone
Publisher: Legend Entertainment
Reviewed by: Dillon Andrews
Price: £0.59

Not a platform that has generated many reviews in the past, but phone apps and downloadable games have started to demand attention in gaming circles.

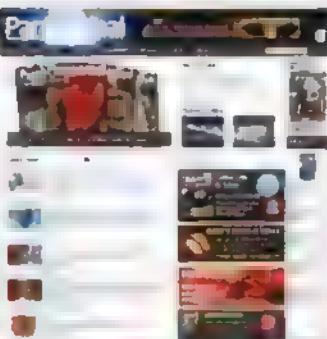
One of last year's iPhone titles, *Spooky Spirits: Puzzle Drop* is a title

worthy of much praise, deserving both in terms of finesse and enjoyment. The general mechanic of the game is simple. You must drop coloured blocks into a grid, and like *Tetris* it is as addictive as it sounds.

There are two modes, one playing in the vein of an inverted version of *Tetris*, and another more unusual and challenging mode. The main fun is to be had in the latter: the puzzle mode. In this mode you are restricted by how many moves you can make, and in order to beat the level you must clear every coloured block on the screen. A lot of strategy and planning is required as this can be quite difficult, but is at the same time addictive and satisfying.

The game is tied together with a cute story about a team of ghosts, Becky and Tim. These bickering siblings accidentally release the Spookies (evil spirits) onto the world of the living, and it's their job to track the ghouls down before they bring too much havoc to the world.

The finesse of the overall experience, and the price tag make this a must have for any mobile gamer. Be sure to check it out.



Check out our game reviews from back issues can be found online at
www.paranormalmagazine.co.uk

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Final date for all competition entries is Monday, March 22.

Competitions



CSI:
THE EXPERIENCE

Tickets to CSI: The Experience in Birmingham

TV crime hit *CSI* has come to Britain in a new format - *CSI: The Experience*, a hands-on, hi-tech and interactive entertainment experience that makes **YOU** the crime-cracker.

Inspired by the TV series, visitors are taken on an exhilarating journey through dark alleys and hot deserts in an attempt to catch the criminals by gathering evidence from the scene of the crime and testing the evidence in a lab using the latest forensic technology.

The hands-on attraction brings to life numerous scientific disciplines and the most advanced technology used today by crime scene investigators and forensic scientists. Now you can join Gil Grissom's ace team as they work alongside Catherine Willows and Greg Sanders in cracking the crimes that fox the brightest brains.

The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History developed *CSI: The Experience* and it earned them the Themed Entertainment Association's Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement. Its development has involved 175 consultants, 1,180 hours of research and 3,740 hours of construction.

CSI: The Experience is making its UK debut at Bullring in Birmingham. It is suitable for all the family, but it is recommended that adults accompany children under 12.

The organisers have generously donated FIVE pairs of tickets for *CSI: Birmingham* to give away. For your chance to win a copy, log on to paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions and be prepared to answer this question:

The Sherlock Holmes stories were influential in encouraging detectives to use forensic evidence at crime scenes. What was the name of Holmes's medical side-kick?

Love After Death Crystal Pendant from Alchemy

Imaginative UK-based jewellery designers Alchemy have added a stunning new range to their collections. The Romantique Vampiria collection is inspired by the current revival in interest in vampires - although Alchemy has been designing vampire-related merchandise since the 1980s.

The Romantique Vampiria range includes pewter fangs dripping with 'blood' and jewellery incorporating crystal hearts and droplets of Crystallized-Swarovski elements, complimented with satin.

The good people of Alchemy have kindly donated a star piece from the Romantique Vampiria collection to give away - a beautiful 'Love After Death Crystal Pendant'. A heart-

shaped crystal depending from a red stain ribbon is the eye-catching centre-piece of this exquisite piece, highlighted with blood red elements.

For your chance to win a Love After Death Crystal Pendant from Alchemy, log on to paranormalmagazine.co.uk/competitions and be prepared to answer this question:

Actors Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee both became famous through playing a vampire. What is the vampire's name?



You may also enter by post. Please write your answer, with your full name and contact details, onto a postcard or sealed-down envelope and send it to: Competitions, Paranormal Magazine, Jazz Publishing, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ.



Bookend

NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE CULTURE CLASHES

By Nick Redfern



It has been some time since my last 'Bookend', so the editor and I put our collective thinking-caps on and came up with an idea: taking into consideration the fact that, until my early-30s, I had lived in jolly old England, but have made pistol-packing Dallas, Texas, my home for the last ten years, what about something that would focus on the differences between the respective conference scenes in Britain and America?

I do, after all, speak at a lot of gigs on both sides of the Atlantic and I have to say, spotting the differences wasn't difficult at all.

Aside from the undeniable fact that Britain and America are two nations divided by a common-language (as many have rightly said!), there is one big difference between Blighty-based events and those hosted in the Land of the Free (at least, it was that way before Dubya, Cheney and the Patriot Act reared their ugly heads).

At the vast majority of US-based UFO events at which I speak, the organisers invariably want the lecturers to deliver presentations that adhere to the notion that the flying saucer puzzle has extraterrestrial origins.

Similarly, when I'm speaking at gigs of a specifically cryptozoological nature in the States, it's more often than not the case that people want to hear that Bigfoot is simply an unidentified, flesh-and-blood ape, or that lake monsters are surviving plesiosaurs.

I have seen some of the head-honchos in the world of conference-organising in America react with anger, disbelief, shock and downright puzzlement and embarrassment when I bring up the possibility in my presentations that Bigfoot might actually be a Tulpa-style thought-form or that the monsters of Loch Ness might be nothing stranger than giant eels.

And, you would not believe (well, you might) the reaction that was generated when, at several States-side gigs in 2005 – and in the wake of the publication of my book, *Body Snatchers in the Desert* – I offered the theory that the notorious incident that occurred at Roswell, New Mexico in July 1947, had less to do with flesh-and-blood aliens, and much more to do with dark and dubious military experiments of a very home-grown nature. Such was the backlash you might have thought I had just admitted to eating a couple of cuddly puppies for lunch!

But, in Britain, I see a very different situation. Here, I see, and speak to, audiences that don't seem to need to uphold particular ideas and belief systems, but who seem far more inclined to accept – or to at least consider – some of the more esoteric and alternative views that pervade the world of the weird.

So, why should that be? Certainly, one reason is that the conference circuit in the US is much more commercialised than in Britain and the content is driven by the fact that in America people want to hear about bug-eyed aliens, X-Files-type conspiracies and still-surviving dinosaurs. Such topics bring in the punters in droves.

Of course, that doesn't – and never will – stop me from expressing my more alternative views on such matters. But it does mean that while I am often met with slightly frosty smiles in the States if I opine that the best way to see Bigfoot may be to invoke it via ancient rite and ritual, in Britain's such a suggestion is far more likely to result in a genial chat over a pint or several at the post-gig party.

Nick Redfern

Nick Redfern is the author of many books on the paranormal, including the forthcoming *Monsters of Texas: Strange Creatures of the Lone Star State* (co-written with fellow cryptozoologist, Ken Gerhard, and which is due to be published shortly by Jonathan Downes' CFZ Press).

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